

FRANK SINATRA'S LAST AUDITION

Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

MAY 1996 \$3.00

LIVE HARD

Bruce
Willis
lights up
the town
with
Jay
McInerney

**MARTHA
SHERRILL**
Learning
to Love Andre
Agassi

**RANDALL
ROTHENBERG**
Is Forty
Too Old to
Retire?

**LYNN
DARLING**
Buying the
Girl Next Door
in Havana

MIKE LUPICA
Flying Again
with Michael
Jordan



*Sport coupes have knockout looks
but no place to put anything.*

*Luxury coupes have plenty of gadgets
but look like boxes.*

*Sport coupes have road-clinging suspensions
but bone-jarring rides.*

BEFORE.

*Luxury coupes have silky-smooth rides
but really guzzle the gas.*

*Sport coupes have big engines
but only a facsimile of a backseat.*

*Luxury coupes have lots of room
but cost lots of money.*

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Sebring LSi's 24-valve V6 engine generates 195 horsepower,
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unlike some sport coupes, Sebring doesn't make any extra claims on
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regular unleaded.
gasoline. So

fun-on fun is uncom-

promised by the final hump of expensive fuel.

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THE FRAGRANCE AND SKIN

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Esquire

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BY JAY MCINERNEY

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Esquire

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underwear



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MIND
GAME.



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Conclusion

A day of recognition. A time of pride. A time of accomplishment. A time of promise. A time of hope.

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Boys on the Side

I JUST REACHED your February issue and turned straightaway to "When Cereille Met Tim" (by Cereille Paglia). I must tell you that five pages was such a treat. Allen with his fabulously basic, tongue-in-cheek masculinity and Paglia, possibly the most sensible woman I've ever read. I hope Paglia and her quart continue to great American prose.

—D. CHERIE McLENNAN
Solomon, Alaska

I ENJOYED the low bar between Cereille "women are stronger than men"

Paglia and Tim "women are *stronger* than men" Allen. With friends like those at court, it seems to me that in the bank of the genders, men are like the Indians and women are like the white people. Every year, they approach me and roost on our territory, every year, we get pushed back and back. In a few years, when every profession, occupation, indeed every area of life, has become thoroughly feminized, what are we going to do? Being "bad" is not an honorable answer.

—JEFFREY WEINER
Sault, Mich.

AFTER READING the Tim Allen piece, AT least it's pretty obvious on which side of the gender war Cereille Paglia's sympathies lie. If *Snop-On* could ever add a penis to its line of products, Paglia will run right out and get one.

—STACY SCHMELLENBACH BOGLE
Fort Worth, Tex.

Powder Puff

I FOUND THAT, surprisingly, I identified with much of Doug Stanton's "Tossing a Powder" (February). I'm a sensitive, sensitive kind of guy, but I can see that from an evolutionary standpoint, a more virile man is one who mends on after fathering children in order to father some more with someone else. Perhaps this explains why we men are useless—and why women might be naturally attracted to useless men in a basic, instinctive way.

—GEORGE PERKINS
Madison, Wis.

YOUR FEBRUARY COVER of Tim Allen (whipping or grabbing?) was amazing, and I immediately flipped open to the Bad Behavior section. What I found was not the slashing derring-do of bad boys but cheap armchair philosophizing on irresponsible actors.

Doug Stanton's "Tossing a Powder" was particularly offensive. Thus, he, witless, heinous, and frolic glibly is somehow supposed to redeem the fact that he abandoned his wife and child? Bad behavior is reinforced by the rhetoric of needless soul searches who ponder to men's basic fears and insecurities and exploit them by insuring that things will never change.

—JENN THOMPSON
New York, N.Y.

AS A NEWFED with a one-year-old Aaron and a four-year-old daughter, I have felt many times what Doug Stanton conveyed in his article. But I don't need to abandon my children. Hade, I feel as if I'm abandoning them when I take them to day care.

—TIM DRAPE
Blue Spring, Fla.

Remembering Dad

I JUST FINISHED reading "A Prayer for My Father," by Jerry Adler (February). His account of coming to terms with his father's fate really touched me. My father, one-year old, father died after a stomach battle with cancer when I was thirteen, and now, six years later, when I look in the mirror, I see my father. Unlike Adler, I don't have the opportunity to speak to my father again, so what I have is all I'll ever have. Jerry, don't worry, you'll never forget him.

—DANIEL ANDERSON
Manassas, Mich.

Newtonian Cynics

H I GOTTA HAND OVER Bung ("I Incommence Myself" February) and wanna say shalim to Shapiro ("Me the People" February). Their articles on the Newtonian revolution were great! Good! But it would have really been in character for Bung had he commented on the "Newtonian" diet of the sci-

ences—uh, I mean, of the first rate (the good-of-boys all-white male club). Keep the satire coming!

—BILL McCLIM
Mad, Tex.

AS THE SAYING GOES in Washington these days, "You just don't get it." I am referring to how in your February issue you list even obviously better writers, Walter Shapiro and Stanley Binstock, Newt Gingrich. Shapiro's attack on Gingrich as a danger to the Constitution was journalistic sleazebagging at its worst. And Bung's attempt at predicting senility in a Gingrich "House Committee on Constitutional Activities" was more mean-spirited, evil, and insidious than anything Gingrich has ever stated or will attempt to do.

—MAY A THOMPSON
Dundalk, Md.

Keeping Up with the Trumps

I WAS VERY disappointed that you chose to give a voice to a very odd individual in February's Reality Check column. Chuck Jones is a convicted criminal who has been stalking me, my family, and my friends for a long time. His sickness causes him to make up stories about me whenever he is given a voice. These fabricated stories appear only in magazines looking to create a stir, even though they know these stories are false and are well aware of the injury to my family and lack of credibility. By your giving him this recognition, someone with this illness only receives more energy to hurt my family and others.

—MARLA MAPLES TRUMP
New York, N.Y.

FOR YOU TO ALLOW the article on pediatric transplants, or coma (Reality Check, February), without having so much as called me to verify the facts is a disgrace. For you to quote from a lawsuit from a very sick person like Chuck Jones is pathetic journalism. I have not had, or even been heard of, a genetic transplant.

—DONALD J. TRUMP
New York, N.Y.

Letters to the editor should be mailed with your address and daytime phone number to: The Sound and the Fury, Esquire, c/o New York City Post Office, New York, N.Y. 10011, or sent by E-mail to esquire@earthlink.net. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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BACKSTAGE WITH ESQUIRE

Bruce Willis and Jay McInerney vaguely remember meeting each other—the first time, that is. They do recall that it was in New York in the early eighties, and it may have been at Café Central, where Willis studied law, or Renaissance, where Willis taught law, or Hearstman, where Willis got to begin his reporter career—McInerney with his debut novel, *Bright Lights, Big City*, and Willis with his TV series, *Moonlighting*—and were, shall we say, feeling celebratory.

Today, of course, Willis is about to star in *The Hard Way* with a vengeance, and McInerney has just completed his fifth novel, which will be published next year. Beyond that, the two have shared (somewhat) out of life's left line. They have become fathers (Willis and Demi Moore have three children, while McInerney and his wife, Helen, recently had twins, a boy and a girl.) So instead of toasting back Stoli on the rocks, as in the old days, they are now sipping Simba.

"Having kids was the end of Bruce's party-animal mode," says McInerney, who took Willis back to some of their old haunts ("Bruce Willis in the Hot Zone," page 64). "And it's hard to modify my behavior. It does give you a little sense of a reason to get up before noon."

Further evidence that McInerney has been steeled is the fact that he now divides his time between New York and Nashville. He is quick to point out, though, that "real life takes place in New York. But you can't always live your real life—particularly my life, because it would kill you."

Another man who has deemed up his act—or at least shaved his head—is Andre Agassi. Contributing editor **Martha Sherrill** profiles tennis's once-husky Zen master on page 88 ("Edificating Andre"). Sherrill herself gave up the game when she was fifteen. "I was playing around doubles with a friend of mine's father," recalls Sherrill, who is a staff writer for *The Washington Post's* Style section, "and he told me I had nice legs. That was the last time I picked up a racket."

Generation Xer isn't the only ones dropping out and stepping backstage all day. **Russell Rothberg's** "What Makes Serrano Wild?" (page 71) chronicles the lives of some prince-of-life shakers. Rothberg, who is making his return to *Esquire* as a contributing editor—he left in 1986 to

join *The New York Times*—admits that he did a little looking himself after finishing his recently published book on

the advertising world, *When the Suckers Meet* (Alfred A. Knopf). "I shuddered in France for about four months," he says. "I went to the market every day—sometimes just to look."

Cuba's economic distress for Cuba have

long since died, and now the country's moral center cannot hold. Each night, the prostitutes of Havana—the middle-class girls now down-bred to the docks in search of that one man who can provide a better life in Europe or the United States—at perhaps just a new scene ("Midnight in Havana," page 96). "This is not a story about sex, though," says contributing editor **Lynn Darling** of her piece on Cuba's justice. "It's about what happens when people are left without a future or hope."

"When Frank Sinatra dies, it will mark the end of the twentieth century for millions of people," says **Jonathan Schwartz**, who writes about what may well have been "Of Blue Eyes" last performance, in Las Vegas ("And Now the End Is Near," page 60). Schwartz, a veteran radio personality—his *Sinatra Saturday* show on WQEW, 1960 AM in New York, is now in its sixth year—is also the author of three novels, the most recent of which is *The Man Who Knew Gay Gene*.

For a generation of single men, **Bruce Jay Friedman's** *The Lonely Guy's Book of Life* was the ultimate survival manual. The *Lonely Guy* is now a little more mature, grayer around the temples, and very concerned about his Mar-a-Lago intake. He has become the Slightly Older Guy and his guide to life appears on page 103. Friedman's son, **Bruce Friedman**, illustrated the feature, and the book from which it is adapted, *The Slightly Older Guy* (to be published next month by Simon & Schuster), this is the first time these two have collaborated. "I approached him with trepidation," says Friedman père, whose work has appeared in *Esquire* since 1964. "But first I went to the wise man I know, Mario Puzo, and asked him what to do. He said, 'Tell him he owes you.'"



Lynn Darling



Jay McInerney



Martha Sherrill



Russell Rothberg



Jonathan Schwartz

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55-0	111 ft.
45-0	76 ft.
35-0	48 ft.

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C A M A R O  G E N U I N E C H E V R O L E T

Reality Check

Bugs

Don't Call Us . . .

WPAUL STREETER's top advertising firm, Kroll Associates, recently made the Watergate bangles look like **White Suits**, thanks to a bungled snoop job: Kroll's reputation was built in the eighties on its digging up dirt on the likes of **T. Boone Pickens** and **Sir James Goldsmith** for firms such as **Solomon Brothers** and **Shearman & Lehman**.

Lately, however, it's been caught up in an embarrassing situation involving the **Daily Express**, one of Britain's leading newspapers. **Andrew Gowers**, managing director in the newspaper, called in Kroll to spy on his colleague **Michael Moore**, the paper's advertising director and one of its most

powerful and highly paid executives. Kroll's London bureau placed hidden microphones in Moore's office in hopes of catching him in a personal or professional indiscretion. But while installing the bugs, one of the sleuths left behind what can safely be described as a clutz. He dropped a few of his business cards.

Moore has since resigned from the paper, and though the Express paid Kroll's bill, it is trying to distance itself from the awkward incident.

Kroll, meanwhile, has been the butt of weekend jokes about its snuff's skills of stealth. Says one source, "Maybe they should just wear T-shirts that say, 'We're it'."

Partners

Bad News for Georgette Mosbacher

Poor **Michael Kennedy**. He may be about to trade in his frequent **Grolier** adversary **Fat Buchanan**—who will likely run for president in 1996—and it might be for **Arianna Huffington**. **Huffington**, now-age author and more interesting half of former congressman **Michael Huffington**, "Whatever you think of him," says a source, "he's bright and in-

Family Matters

Name-Calling at Harvard

In-one problems have apparently spawned a name change at Harvard. The **Joan Shorenstein** **Baron Center** on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy at the Kennedy School is literally going back to its roots: name—the **Joan Shorenstein Center**—and sources say it's because the San Francisco real estate tycoon who funded



Arianna Huffington (cynical head?)

timely well spoken. And she's right: with a lot of **Washington's** "power Republicans" for now, **Huffington** has been working out's media bashing show called **Real the Press**.

but, says the source, "she'd give it up in a heartbeat for something as highly visible and highly regarded as **Grolier**." Assuming it's okay with **John Edgar**.

the \$5 million center and named it after his daughter didn't snuff care for the gay she married, political pundit **Michael Barone**. So, the sources say, **Walter Shorenstein** agreed to down an additional \$5 million if "**Barone**" would be dropped from its name.

Neither **Shorenstein** nor **Barone**, the coauthor of **The Al-**

most of American Politics and a columnist for **U.S. News & World Report**, returned calls. **Marvin Kalb**, the center's director, confirms that **Shorenstein** asked for the name change and that he recently made another \$5 million grant to the center. But, he insists, the two events weren't linked. Probably just a coincidence.



Sarah a nice family.

Presidential Affairs

Make Peace for Daddy

PROUD MUM FOR Playboy and doing a little bookmaking may have finally tamed **novelist Tess Davis**, daughter of **Ronald and Nancy Reagan**. Davis, who publicly bonded with her father when he was president, is now writing a loving comic about him. *Angels Don't Die My Father's Gift of Faith* is described as an "inspirational memoir" of Reagan and

will be published later this year by Harper-Collins.

"I wrote it last year when I was going through a very dark period in my life," says Davis. "I realized that the spiritual sustenance I was getting on was from my childhood and from my father. Of all the things the world knows about **Ronald Reagan**, they should also know that he gave this incredible gift to at least one of his children."

Now, if only **Any Surfer** would come home.



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MAN AT HIS BEST

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DESIGN

Solitary Craft

A little of water helps the spirit that is in the air," Henry David Thoreau. So agrees the Ken Farrow-style voice for Wadden Paddles. Thoreau has become the spokesperson for Wadden, truly cast in the spirit of his line of innovative plastic kayaks. But it is not so much Thoreau the naturalist as Thoreau the economist who applies, the Thoreau who is out to reinvigorate the basics of ordinary life and keeps accounts on everything from beans to beer. Wadden's Thoreau is less the bird-watcher than the bean counter.

Paul Farrow had not encountered a kayak until he found himself contemplating the mental model he had was paddling on a Maine vacation trip. Thirty pounds of plastic, a sturdy five corners, a pound that sold for \$750.

was his conclusion. That did Farrow—leading a life of rest of quiet desperation at least of round discomfort in his office—saw the job—got back to his and saw the kayak.

He found a designer and a "roommate" and created key distribution deals with B&B, CM&S, and L. L. Bean. Now Wadden Paddles offers one of those fashionable "natural movements" in beige, and polished in the little metal rumples on the tops of its torso, a video with folk music and many more, and kayaks that not only weigh and cost less than their competitors but also trade strength and look more elegant.

The latest model, the Vision, is twelve and a half feet of recycled plastic that will for a long time. The Vision is offered in a series of two-tone color schemes like a red-orange, darktop, while the earlier Navigator and Experience models, with just 90 percent recycled plastic, come in snappy yellow, blue, and green. Old Hank would be impressed. **H**

A Thoreau redesign: With its Experience kayak (\$499), Wadden Paddles translated the basics with elegance and thrift.



Dark artist: The actor's subtle, versatile craft dazzles the eye and chills the soul.

COOL CHARACTER

The Devil in Tim Roth

IF THERE WERE a powdered wig and rouge, he'd look a lot like Archie Cunningham, the sadistic cop played to a ticking T by Tim Roth in the island-castle epic *Rob Roy*. Roth, last seen knocking off a Volley dealer with Amanda Plummer in *Help*.

Then, here comes his 38 for a super *Patriot*. Quentin Crisp tickled

out as a psychotic Zorro and you got the idea. It's a whole new breed of villainy.

"My wife was the inspiration for Archie's look," Roth explains, appearing decidedly unimpressed in standard L.A. slackerwear: knit Rasta cap, huggy cords, and flannel shirt worn open to reveal an aggressively drugged underarm. "She's fascinated by women's drama from 1930s France. They describe these guys from court who were wonderful lovers

very athletic, very strong, and very vile. Then you see paintings of them, and they're completely effeminate and almost looking. They look like very, very ugly men in drag."

All of which makes the actor's performance thus much more amazing. When should, by all rights, be a cartoonish, chillingly real study in soullessness—a subject, according to Roth, for which the peculiarities of his own life prepared him nicely.

"I was middle class growing up, see, but I fitted all the course to go to the posh schools and ended up at a very, very rough school in Boston, on South London. So I knew what it's like to be bullied. I was around some people who were truly fucking scary."

"Like Archie Cunningham," he adds, with a dead gaze and a half-smile almost casual in its cruelty. "No conscience at all."

The actor turns into a snail, but the eyes stay cold. You wonder if he's acting. —JERRY STARR

Other Sightings

Roth is also in two films as a hot man in *Circle of Lies*, just out. Then it's on to *Four Rooms*, in which—watch out, Jerry Lewis!—he steps into the hellish attire to play the hotel help-somebody a quarter of tales directed by legends Alvin Karpis, Robert Rodriguez, and the current king of hip himself, Quentin Tarantino. Word is, he's happy, which is really scary.

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Melvin and Mario Van Peebles: Father and son come full circle with a new badassness song

FILM

Power to the Peebles

IN 1970, Black Panther leader Huey Newton posed a new film, *Short Sharp Shock*, fundraising, in the party's newspaper. The film, about a street leader turned social revolutionary, launched the career of pioneering black director Melvin Van Peebles and included a performance by his 10-year-old son, Mario. A quarter century later, Mario Van Peebles, director of *New Jack City* and *Rise*, discusses the genesis of his new movie, *Farther*, a cinematic tribute to the iconic

movement with a screenplay by his father.

"When I was a kid," he recalls, "my dad's line was always, 'Man, you don't know nothing. I used to hang with the Panthers.' I wanted to find out what that was all about."

Dressed all in black, his fedora sporting a jumpy red feather, a cigar gripped between his teeth, Melvin Van Peebles radiates hipster calm. "The film, in my opinion, is just about perfect," he says proudly. "I'm blown away that we were

able to make this movie."

Farther mixes actual and fictional characters as it races through the movement's history, from its establishment as the power on the streets of Oakland to its eclipse by the bloodbath of heroin desperation. It stars Marcus Chong as the charismatic Newton, whose rise is seen through the eyes of a Panther recruit played by Kaden Hudson. Old radicals and New Jack actors contribute cameo and supporting roles.

The film reflects renewed interest in the Panther

ism, following a spate of retrospective accounts of the movement from both within and without, including books by Elaine Brown, David Hilliard and Hugh Pearson. Subtlety, political judgment or moral appraisal, *Farther* plays out as heroic melodrama, glorying in the sheer energy of swelling political power. But it also vividly conveys the denied dedication and paranoia engendered by the onslaught of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI and its local allies. Given the ultimate defeat of the Panther movement to an implosion of drug abuse and macho infighting, *Farther's* going-out-as-a-blaze-of-glory fade leaves a powerful aftertaste of tragic irony.

—DANIEL FERGUSON

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RESTAURANTS

John Mariani

A Bistro for the 1990s

IN MY CALLOW youth, I thought it the height of sophistication to take a South Lawrence girl to one of the little French bistros in New York's Theater District, where, for less than 100, we would linger over onion soup, cog, or vin, and choose caramelized pork-knobby steaks, fennel rosettes, and sherry copper pots. There were alcohol, more expensive establishments on the East Side, but the menus were much the same, and you always felt you had stolen away to a Montparnasse bistro like those Hemingway described.

Then, in the late 1970s, a new breed of bistro was introduced in New York. Places like Paris Bistro downtown, Jean Claude in SoHo, and, especially, Jo Jo uptown, larded with the elegant menus and decor of the past and offered an innovative cuisine that set off a nationwide bistro boom. But not until now have any of them so successfully integrated the fondness moderns of the family-man French bistro with the chic modernity of 1990s New York as has **La Goulue**.

Ironically, La Goulue (named for the Moulin Rouge dancer immortalized by Toulouse-Lautrec) has been around for years, distinguished mainly by its snobishness, its dull food, and a clientele increasingly long in the tooth. Then, last year, the bistro moved to 745 Madison Avenue (212/685-8165), and when François Lapeere, former maître d' at



Goulue style, New York chic: La Goulue's glowing main course, the goat cheese, potato, and smoked duck tart (top); salmon in pastry

Le Cirque, and his wife, Susan, joined up with longtime owner Jean Desoyer, La Goulue took wing.

Striking a fine balance between Parisian savoir-faire and New York swagger, the Lapeeres have worked to attract a younger, more fashionable crowd that brings a welcome pot de vin to the little restaurant. The long, partitioned dining room,



dark wooden panels, lace curtains, spindly brown leather bungalows, brass appointments, and zinc trim brought from the Tuileries. To recall such beloved Parisian bistros as Chez Georges, Chez Pauline, and Le Bœuf. The service staff matches the bistro efficiency of its Gallic counterparts minus their notorious boogymaster.

None of this would matter if the kitchen merely mimicked the usual bistro fare. But the Lapeeres have hired a brilliant young chef, Philippe Schmitt, to create a menu that respects the honey virtues of good bistro cooking while shaping them into a personalized cuisine as satisfying as any in Manhattan. His mastery shows in the precise rendering of his fennel dished up side-down tart of warm goat cheese, potato, and smoked duck, delicate ravioli stuffed with wild mushrooms in chestnut broth, sautéed-wrapped salmon in a Provencal, braised duck gland with cardamom-crusted honey. Short ribs of beef are infused with syzygy meat juices and chicken is roasted to perfection and served with marbled potatoes studded with porcini. Cheeses are impossibly ripe. Desserts are irresistible bistro classics: puffy profiteroles lavished with ice cream and chocolate sauce, a caramelized, honey apple tart, and a chocolate tart warm from the oven.

If you go to La Goulue, get there a few minutes before your friends, order the house apéritif-Champagne with extra de miel—and take in the bonhomie of the place. Within moments, you'll feel you are already part of something small and fine, a place your friends will believe you belong and have gladly kept to yourself.

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TRAVEL

White-Water Blues



Downstream glide: In a dory run.

You don't do white water. The thought of big rapids gives you waking nightmares. Then your spouse surprises you with a birthday river trip. A week on Idaho's famous River of No Return, the Salmon Beach carrying a lot of art out white water. If Mary! Streep can do it, dammit, you can, too. See buy waterproof sandals and extra insurance, and go.

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a monstrous green serpent. You know its legs sink, just around the bend, white and dangerous. But your captain knows what he's doing. Seventeen years on this river. But this beauty of a boat himself. No rubber raft bounce. Just an immediate read of the river's subtlest currents telegraphed back through the dory's rigid hull, the gift of a wooden vessel.

Then you hear it. Boiling thunder! The sky is blue. The sun glares.

"That's Kilauea," your guide says. "Kilauea Rapids."

Now you know how Ralph Brown felt when he heard the crack of Bobby Thomson's hit in the 1951 National League playoffs. How Mary! Marlow felt when she heard her plane's engine sputter over Nova Scotia. You know what's coming, and you know there's not a damn thing you can do about it.

You watch hydraulic logchutes compete in your guide's eyes. He maneuvers the dory to one side, has the river do the rest. It does. The dory glides into power too as if it were hatched to a submarine truck. Suddenly, you're flying. Dipping and flying, water spraying in all directions. You hear an odd cracking sound. It's you. Laughing, your head off.

The rest of the trip's a

piece of birthday cake. (The camp chefs actually make you one.) Long, quiet floats to the lushest part of the river. The high, pointed stern of the dory cuts like a nice solo. You're Charlie Parker playing the inside of the name. Adrenaline subsided, you now see where you are. Handsome place. Ancient, outcroppings of bedrock. Forests pines older than your best anagrams, bigger around than two John Caudys, and, thanks to federal protection, still alive.

You pull over for lunch. The guides lay out Greek salad with feta. Apples grilled in good olive oil. Fresh hummus sandwiches. How do they do it?

More than Mom's recipe. You look forward to them now, appreciate their individual character—the washboard rifles, the tight rock chairs.

You camp for the night. River oarsmen have and deliver the local welcome wagon.

Practicalities

OARS offers dory trips on the Salmon River from June through September. Prices run from around \$650 for four days to \$2,100 for twelve. Tests and sleeping kits can be rented. For updated schedules and fees, call OARS, an Apple Camp, California, at 800-346-6271.



Refueling: Steak spread.



Ahead: The Salmon stirs.

The guides go to work like the camp coming to town. A full lunch goes up. So does everyone's tent, but yours. It's a clash done crossed with one inch of rain for long, flexing metal stays that you can't seem to control. You're Jerry Lewis fencing in the wind. A guide helps you out. Laugh with you. Whimsy, now.

Whimsy dinner. Salmon and steak. Steak comes on the cob. Campfire Dutch-oven potch, cobble with heavy cream, whipped by hand in a metal bowl held in the river for chilling. There are no glitches. No bugs (Well, a few mosquitoes.) The Porta Potti is placed far enough from camp for privacy, close enough for security, always with a great view. If you need a shower, you wait in the river. You try that once.

When you get home, you don't remember the inconvenience. Only the night sky. The highest sleep that stored camp for a down-second drink. The burnt campfire perfume still clinging to your sweater. The final growl of the white water announcing that there is indeed a river in the wilderness, and you are through it.

—JESSICA MAXWELL

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Walter Shapiro

The Odd Couple

This year, Bob and Bill must help each other kill Newt and Phil, so that next year, they can get down to business and kill each other

THEY JUST DON'T MAKE one hundred days like they used to. In little more than fourteen weeks, Napoleon escaped from Elba, raised an army, and took on the rest of Europe at Waterloo. (So he lost.) In a breathless three-month-plus flurry of activism, FDR closed the banks, seized control of the economy, and laid the foundation for the New Deal. (He won four terms.) And now, after his hundred days of what might be called the New Deal, Newt Gingrich is ready to enter history with the proud boast ("Thomas Jefferson") that he fulfilled his Contract with America. What this really means, in those oddly diminished terms, is that he sent a packing crate of barely written and often half-baked legislation off to the Senate, where almost all of it will die or survive just long enough to be vetoed by the president. (Gingrich, granted, wrote a bare six unfunded federal mandates, an epic victory that will be celebrated around the campfires at political science conventions for decades to come.)

Maybe it says something about America's attention-deficit disorder, but Gingrich would have been far better off if he had declared victory after thirty days and sent his troops back to the playground for recess. Toward the end of the countdown, Gingrich's act has grown as stale as Howard Stern's, and the speaker (what an apt title for a man who won't shut up) has transferred himself from right-

wing, volentary to just another congressional blowhard. Napoleon, after all, was never spotted by his more articulate lieutenants. When he began railing against "socialists" in the news media, Gingrich came across as the Third Wave's answer to Spiro Agnew. The speaker may be acting out his regret for prematurely taking himself out of the Republican presidential race. For these days, Washington political issues are more than eager to forget the contact and get on with the real business of horse-dropping the real powerbase in Iowa and New Hampshire. Meanwhile, back at the two-dollar window, Gingrich is reduced to the level of a Republican Tip O'Neall.

The overhyped Newtoman Revolution was hurled back to earth by the force of political gravity the day the Senate rejected the balanced-budget amendment. That defeat—as up lifting as it was unexpected—only a few days earlier—left both Gingrich and Bob Dole staggering around the stage like high school actors feigning a Shakespearean death scene. But, I can testify, there were no high fives in the White House, where Clinton sides forced they had won a Pyrrhic victory. A

half hour before the final vote, George Stephanopoulos was harshly glibed when he declared, "From now on, the Gingrich contract is dead." For more evocative of the mood permeating the Clinton White House was the title of a paperback Balzac novel sitting prominently on Stephanopoulos's desk: *Les Illusions*.

LIKE AN NOVEL, the balanced-budget vote was the opening round of All Fall Down: a complex, three-handed political game between Clinton, Dole, and Gingrich that will dominate the rest of the year in Washington. You've heard of win-win strategies? Well, this one seems destined to be lose-lose-lose. Old-fashioned gridlock merely pined a Democratic Congress against a Republican president, often leaving room for eventual compromise. But these days, the intransigence of Bill, Bob, and Newt is not headed for the same interstices or even driving similar vehicles—Clinton is in his chartered "Munro," Dole is driving a sensible Republican Clid-



Going my way? When it comes to stalling Newt's revolution, Clinton and Dole are on the same track.



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OUR MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE

mobile, and Gingrich is strapped to the spot shuffle. Even this metaphor is simplistic, since it doesn't account for the seventy-three thirty-year-old Republican freshmen pushing Gingrich even further to the right or the ten moderate GOP senators whose votes Dole needs for a majority. But Griffin, Clinton's top congressional lobbyist, blames the current power dynamic to "a firewall chess game."

Since Gingrich is the free weight in this balance-of-power struggle, what are his intentions? Even amid the hoopla over the New Congress, there were those who predicted that once the contact was rubber stamped, the speaker would behave like a traditional congressional leader. "Never, was there a record of significant achievement," said a Gingrich confidant. "It can't all be voided by Clinton's victory." Well, maybe. But in a reality check, the day after the balanced-budget vote, I went to see Buffalo congressman Bill Pasco, an architect of the GOP takeover in his role as chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee. Tall, bespectacled, and radiating a charming sincerity, the forty-year-old Pasco (for Susan Millican for late congressional re-election) is the Clark Kent behind Gingrich's superlative fantasies. "We're in a very strong position with the failure of the amendment," Pasco said. "It's our bumper sticker issue: SUPPORT THE BALANCED-BUDGET AMENDMENT NOW. ORDER ELECT MORE REPUBLICANS."

The contract was a firm filled with our carnal, but not comes the money talk of trying to govern, which for House Republicans means forgetting the gossamer and coming up with an alternate budget. Already, they have revealed their Vag-C-Money long-term strategy. Shee and like the Great Society Democrats, who have had nothing to laugh about this year, gleefully joke: "Whoever thought that Gingrich's battle cry would be 'Women and children first'?"

So I asked Pasco: What's the bumper sticker that will symbolize Gingrich's budget case? He stared into space for maybe thirty seconds before he replied, "Good question." At the moment, Pasco was served by his helper, signaling a door vase. The best thinking about an answer, he said confidently when he returned ten minutes later

"Our marriage issue might be to attack the structure of federal departments. Move to eliminate Commerce, Labor, and HUD." Something told me that the congressman had not yet run this idea past a pollster. Can you imagine the GOP consolidating the heartland and relying the uncommitted with bumper stickers that read **WORK IS NOW MATH 100?**

IF THERE WERE normal times, Dole and Clinton would probably reach some sort of add-a-only accommodation on the budget—and leave Gingrich to stomp his feet like Rumpelstiltskin. But Dole can't be too obvious about playing the difference with the White House, not when he's also after Clinton's job. This makes the position and Dole pious co-conspirators, a kind of push-me-pull-you between Bob and Bill.

And in the Senate, the majority leader's nemesis is not the filibuster but Phil Gramm's bluster for his gimel-eyed presidential mail is an insidious budget-cutter that he makes Mitt Romney look like the Lady Beautiful. Dole will lose control of the Senate if he embraces the slash-and-burn tactics of the G-men (Gingrich and Gramm) and he will alienate Republican primary voters if he doesn't. "It's very hard for Bob because by nature he's very moderate on things," said Senator Chris Dodd, the new chairman of the Democratic party. "But he's heading for a train wreck, even between his interests as a leader and what he has to do to get the Republican nomination." The pressure is beginning to show, as it did when Dole started after the balanced-budget vote. "There would have been an amendment if we had had a real president."

Clinton is not enough (for slash-and-burn) singularity is about the only thing that's never been in doubt), but Dole, in his angry assemblage, stood, he at the dreadful state of presidential weakness. Until a month or two ago, Clinton's problems were mostly of his own making, from guys in the military to, well, you know the rest. But now Clinton's image is being eroded on the political-finance market, and it seems as if Betting beak is handing the account. The president's current vulnerability seems to stem from his recent performance in office (surprisingly strong,

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THE KING ARTHUR CHESS SET

OUR MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE

more on that later), but from the political calculation that he will not—may, cannot—win reelection.

When I began working on this month's column, I had the notion that, on the cusp of Nixon's anniversary, the time was ripe for a Clinton's back-bag-thru-the-eyes exclusive. With Gingrich becoming intimate as a political symbol, Washington was desperate for a new story line. What was I supposed to write about? The quiet leadership of Tim Wachtel? The awesome backstage power of Hazel O'Leary? But I began to sense I might be in trouble when I casually mentioned my bold journalistic plans to a Clinton staffer I encountered in a White House hallway and she recoiled. "Better take your lunch. It will be lonely out there."

I felt as if I were about to witness a rare review for Broadway show the Democrats have finally succeeded from their shock over the repudiation at the polls last November. Now they're awfully deeply depressed. When a top White House aide told me, "The electoral map is daunting," I marked him down as an optimist. When Dodd began muttering that opposition to Gingrich's budget plans will spark "a voter turnout like you've never seen," he sounded like a true McGovern believer on the eve of '70.

The Clinton crew, in short, has yet to figure out a plausible road map to reelection, other than hoping that the Republicans' moderate-leaning congressman (Bob Dornan).

Faced with dispensing 1995 sessions, Clinton seems to be living by Samuel Johnson's maxim, "When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully." The president finally emerged from his wounded postelection wallow and has begun, yes, to act as he's supposed to act. His speeches have been crisp; his public appearances more focused and matter-of-factly say in the White House on message.

Faced by the voters from his near-fatal embrace of the congressional Democrats, Clinton is at last on his own. The president still consults the machinery of government, and he is learning to use these levers of power (executive orders, regulatory waivers) to chart an agenda that is not at all dependent on Congress. The froed and flogged

White House staff has been revulsed by the long-overdue arrival of Mike McCurry as press secretary (not a hint of Doc Dea Myers nostalgia in the pressroom) and the behind-the-scenes work of the improbably named deputy chief of staff, Erikson Bowler, whose management wizardry, we are told, has increased the president's "thinking time" by 60 percent.

Sure, there have been missteps, (as in the Clinton White House, after all Clinton's faith in his own persuasive powers caused him to believe naively that he could instinctively settle the baseball strike. Who does he think he is, God? And chief of staff Leon Panetta nervously jumped the gun on the nomination of Henry Foster to be surgeon general with disastrous results, unless you think covering abortion is an edifying spectacle. (Refer to the Senate. Abortion is legal.) Facing the headline, the president reacted very much unlike himself. He decided to go down fighting, playing hard to his base of black and feminist voters, knowing there is next chance of Senate approval for the nomination.

Moore—which is measured on a sliding scale here in Washington—matters Clinton began to show life when he realized that he could never work with Gingrich. How liberating for the president finally to confront an ideological rival beyond names and compromise, the struggle is as facing as Will Rogers parading out a stranger.

Clinton's fate may be that he finally learned the presidency at the point in his term when it no longer amazed. Still, even in his weakened state, the president can hold his own in the everyman-for-himself struggle against Gingrich and Dole. These days, to update a hoary Washington adage, "Congress is poised and the president disposes." Gingrich's headlined days ended not to be just like the bookended rules that appeared in all angry yelber and no losing action. Granted, the speaker's bold efforts to create legislative government will be remembered as a fascinating failure, the first new twist in generations on our impetuous system of government. But as the Republicans are learning, you can't run the country without the White House. And, according to the Constitution, that's Bill Clinton's domain for at least every nine months. Tough luck, Nixon.



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Mike Lupica

Let's Fly Again

His baseball career may have been down-to-earth, but Michael Jordan's return to basketball is pure heaven

FRANK SINATRA, who is supposed to be retiring for good now at the age of seventy-nine, retired once before. It happened on June 12, 1971, to be exact. Sinatra sang "Angel Eyes," finished with the line, "Sense me while I disappear," and then the stage went black at the Ambassador Theatre in Los Angeles. And that was supposed to be it for the greatest singer popular music had ever produced or will ever produce. (See "And Now the End Is Near," page 60.)

That retirement lasted about two years. Sinatra was back in the recording studio in the summer of 1973 and was doing concerts by then. Whatever the reasons he gave for returning, there was really only one that made any sense: He *had* being Frank Sinatra.

But he couldn't be Sinatra unless he sang. The same could be said about Michael Jordan. He can't be Michael Jordan unless he plays basketball, no matter how famous he remains, no matter how beloved, no matter how much money he continues to make from endorsements.

Jordan retired from basketball on October 9, 1993, after three straight NBA titles, seven straight scoring titles, one college basketball national championship, and two Olympic gold medals. There was nothing left for him to do, nothing left for him to prove. He had dunked the ball enough—goodbye.

For about twenty minutes, before anybody knew it, or could believe their eyes, Jordan was announcing a new career in baseball and had suited up in a Birmingham Barons uniform—Double-A ball. Throughout his basketball life, from the time when he hit the jump shot that won the University of North Carolina a national championship in 1982, he had brought out the Walter Mitty in us all. He had made us dream of being able to soar through the air, switch

hands, and just hang, never worrying about permission to land.

Then Jordan himself became Mitty. Number 23 of the Bulls was number 45 of the Barons. In his one season, he hit .301, with three home runs. Not exactly a Cooperstown career, but at least he seemed to be having fun. He had just reported to his second spring training with the White Sox when he announced that he was retiring from baseball because of the strike, saying he could not continue to develop at a rate that satisfied him.

From Florida, he flew back to Chicago, went to a Bulls practice, and a week later, seventeen months after his retirement, Jordan was in the season's starting lineup, an instant television, against the Indiana Pacers. For the first time in a long time, the question on everybody's lips wasn't "What do you think about O.J.?"

This wasn't just sports-page news, either. Even before he got into a game, word that Jordan was practicing with the Bulls caused Nike's stock, and the stocks of other companies to which he has sold his name, to rise. Now there are a lot of athletes who can jump, but there is only one who can make the stock market jump the way Jordan did just by getting into some practice swings.

I DO NOT REALLY KNOW Michael Jordan. I'm not sure anyone in the media really does, though. Lord knows that is not always the way things are presented. In many ways, Jordan is as close as Joe DiMaggio once was. Regardless of how available he is, it's as if there is a fire he has drawn between himself and the world.

And he does not want that line crossed. If it is, he will resist. I believe it is one of the things that drove him into his basketball retirement in the first place.

There had always been stories about his gambling. The

Sky-high: Jordan's return has made the stock market jump

KOOL

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league had looked into the allegations and some of his relationships long before some nobody named Richard E. Quinn wrote about beating Jordan out of a million dollars, playing golf. Then, during the Eastern Conference finals between the Knicks and the Bulls in 1995, five months before the notorious announcement, there was a story in *The New York Times* about Jordan driving down in Adams City for a night of gambling in Adams City that morning. I saw Quinn hit back to his hotel and drive or four in the morning. The Bulls and Knicks had a game later that night, which the Bulls ended up losing.

Jordan stopped talking to the media. We all wrote about the incident anyway. My column in *New York* was also being run that spring in the *Chicago Tribune*, and I wrote that the whole world should shut up about Jordan going to Adams City. My point was not only that Jordan was the best basketball player any of us had ever seen but that he has never stopped working to make himself better. Everything that we demand of our sports stars, all the rules we set first by down—Michael Jordan had followed those rules. And as far as I was concerned, if shooting hoops or playing basketball was his way of relaxing before a game, leave him alone.

I just wanted to watch him play. The next game between the Bulls and the Knicks was in Chicago. I was standing underneath the basket that night when the Bulls came up the steps from their locker room. Jordan stopped when he saw me. When he started to talk, I looked over my shoulder, thinking he was talking to somebody else. Then I realized it was me.

He put out his hand and said, "Thank you," and then kept going.

I don't think I had anything to do with the wonders of my prose. I think I had more to do with Jordan treating words of respect as a kindness at a time when he felt wounded. This was Jordan on the ground, not in midair.

I have not had a conversation with him since.

PERHAPS Michael Jordan would have proved us all wrong in baseball. Maybe the thing that pushed him past his own talents in basketball would have driven him past the improbabilities of starting a baseball career

at thirty-one, and he would have played better this year in Triple A ball than he did in Double A and would have ended up in the big leagues the year after that.

It would not have mattered. He never looked right in that baseball uniform. It was always going to look as if he had just shown up for some charity softball game. He had gone from being the very best at something to just another batter, although a celebrated batter. He made errors. He had that lousy swing. He was struck out by kids who probably grew up with little Mike Jordan posters in their bedrooms. Still, he played with a smile, and I thought he handled the whole thing with amazing grace.

"Michael" didn't fail at baseball. Phil Jackson, the Bulls' coach, said the same day that Jordan walked away from the game "Baseball failed Michael." Jackson was talking about the baseball strike and how Jordan didn't feel that he could get the work he needed with the business and landscapes and truck drivers the owners had brought in as replacement players.

And Jordan, for his part, sounded as if he was in baseball denial when he listened his retirement on the strike. The truth is as smooth as he could look chasing a ball or running the bases, Jordan was really no better than a replacement player.

The real truth, though, is that for Michael Jordan baseball was simply a replacement sport. He tried to use it to replace something he did better than anyone who had ever lived. That dream was shattered from the start.

"Michael Jordan is the best that will ever play the game," the great Indiana University coach Bob Knight said to me once for an *Esquire* article.

While Jordan was mulling over his return to the NBA, I was sitting in the New York Knicks' locker room one night before a game against the Denver Nuggets. And my conversation with the Knicks' point guard, Derek Harper, got around to Jordan and when his answer would be on the league and the playoffs, and finally Harper asked me what I thought.

"I just want to watch him play some more," I said.

"You wouldn't be so swept away if you had to guard him too. I can promise you that," Harper said.

No, I wanted him back. We wanted him back, because it seemed sports had turned so lousy as soon as he left. The 1995-96 basketball season was dreary, concluding with a badly rated final between the Knicks and the Houston Rockets. There was the baseball strike and the hockey strike and the O.J. Simpson trial. When Simpson took his ride that night in the white Bronco, it was the single most exciting thing that happened during the 1994 NBA Finals, precepting game five in much of the century.

So much had changed during Jordan's time away from the NBA that Mike Tyson had somehow gone from being a controversial input to a boxing hero who was going to come out of jail and save the sport. It was ironic that Jordan and Tyson, once the two biggest names in all of sports, were back in the headlines at the same point in March. Jordan for his return to the Bulls, Tyson for his return to society from the Indiana jail where he had been incarcerated since 1991.

People were not so unified in their desire to watch Tyson fight again as they were in their longing to watch Jordan play basketball again—not even close. But there was the sense that if both of them returned, high drama would return with them, even though no one has forgotten the terrible curse for which one of the Mike-Tyson—was sent away. When Jordan was still in baseball and Tyson was still in prison, the two biggest sports men were Shaquille O'Neal and Deon Sanders. These seemed to be a sure, no matter how much you liked to watch both of them, that we could do better. Shaq is a wonderful talent, but he is not a wonder to watch. Deon is the funniest thing I have ever seen in a football uniform, but he is a defensive back and hardly ever touches the ball.

Jordan is a solist. He seemed to make basketball legend every night. Even in games that he would have classified as ordinary, he did something. He will always be famous. Sports was still famous when he walked off this stage in Los Angeles in 1991. In self-imposed exile from singing, he was just not famous.

Maybe Michael Jordan understands that now. How could he not? No one ever hid his view. ■



GIORGIO ARMANI

OCCHIALI

Stanley Bing

Scenes from a Mall

You don't need to be rich or drunk to love Las Vegas. Yeah, right.

ON THE WAY OUT. They don't serve meals on airplanes anymore. You have to be on a nine-hour flight to Sri Lanka to get one. But the snack is quite enough for me in my current festive mood—turkey Bologna on a roll with jalapeño peppers on it, an apple, some crackers, a chunk of processed-cheese food, and an oatmeal-cookie sandwich with mandarin-flavor filling. To my right, a baby is screaming. His face is blue, contorted. Cute little guy. Why is he going to Vegas? Hey—why does anybody go to Vegas? To live free or die? Or go to a convent? Maybe both.

In the airport: This place is static. We walk and walk. There seems to be no end in sight. There are slot machines by the baggage claim. A few unimpressive party animals walk by them, gen-

erally get close, move in, circle thoughtfully like dogs regarding a particularly fragrant scrap. One, a dead pale cowboy in a huge duster hat, tall and bone thin, plays down on the curly stool and begins to drop dollar coins down the slot. In less than two minutes, he's lost forty bucks. I feel my back roll nesting in my right fore pocket. A thousand dollars in revenues. I must be up to see it home. Dropping a wad at the airport doesn't seem like an auspicious beginning.

At the hotel, Vegas sits in the middle of the hot, unrefined desert like a jewel on Blythe. Mountains loom in the middle distance, a serene backdrop. Somewhere not far away the land ex-

hibits beautiful, pristine. Here, though, things are definitely man-made. Pinkish mountains tower over us. Buildings and Roy! David Copperfield! Stephanie Powers and Robert Wagner as A. R. Gurney's *Love Letters*?

I step into the lobby of the Mirage. I feel my jaw clank wide open. This place is huge. The reception desk goes on forever. There is a gigantic fish tank behind the clerks, with all kinds of colorful specimens in it. In order to reach the elevators, you have to walk through the jungle area, with hanging ferns and other outdoor greenery, then through the heart of the casino, which is beyond enormous and laid out for maximum confusion. Bells are ringing. Lights are flashing. Several apparently dead people are playing dice. I see an ancient Asian woman sending a cowboyish son. In front of her, a machine is coughing out dollar coins in huge amounts. "When it is done, she begins to put the money back into the machine. I drop a quarter in a slot as I pass by. Slotless quarters pop out. I'm stoned already!

My room boasts a reasonable view. Down below, a colossal interstate volcano is belching fire and smoke. A group of Asian businessmen are videotaping the show. Movie samples of pleasure rear up close by, men working, dancing, flowing in waves over their displays. I look for the cowboy bar for some nuts or crackers, perhaps a drink. There it is, sure. No cowboy bar? I call room service and ask how long it would take to get a sandwich. "Not long! About an hour!" the chirpy voice tells me. I've never been hungry before while residing in a large luxury hotel. It's a strange feeling.

First-night party: It is ten o'clock in the evening back where I came from. Hell, I'm looking forward to this dinner of about fifty people. These are our business partners, with whom we share an uneasy awe at this point in our relationship. So there is a great deal of jostling, and a comedian who's been prepped about us makes pointed jokes at our expense. People are literally wiping away tears of



The Real McCoy Collection

As men and women have gone down to the sea in ships, they have learned over the centuries to dress for the occasion. It has taken Cutty Sark considerable time as well, to march out and locate the genuine articles of seagoing apparel. These eight classics make up the first installment of The Real McCoy Collection, named in honor of Capt. William McCoy, the roguish shipper who in 1823 introduced Cutty Sark to America.



Sou'wester. Yes, there are those who will pay more for foul weather gear, but they will do it for reasons we don't recommend. This is the genuine article, waterproof, windproof and foolproof, meaning it doesn't require an instruction manual to work the zipper. Absolutely the best there is. For absolutely whatever there might be. Available in M, L, XL. \$84.99

Rugby Shirt. Good question—what do the playing fields of Eton have to do with navigating the North Sea? Little, possibly, except we've noticed that rugby players seem to show a propensity for climbing in the high windmills just for the "fun" of it. Other than that, the shirt seems to be warm, oddly rugged, and suitable to hostile conditions. Available in M, L, XL. \$39.85



Headed Sou'wester. Arguably the world's heaviest sou'wester, and possibly the largest. Known to be used as a pillow on trans-Atlantic bananocks. Many sizes, but get the biggest. Available in M, L, XL. \$34.99



Cutty Sark Classics

Apparel for storms at sea evolved from the necessity, not only for comfort and durability, but for agility night in the high yowlers.

The garments, like those who wore them, not only had to work, they had to arrive. While fashion was quickly abandoned for function, function nevertheless developed a style of its own, in simplicity, timelessness, and often ingenuity.

Found Nowhere Else In The World

The garments on these pages are nothing less than the Real McCoy. And while today's technology may make contributions of its own, these classics bear the legacy of centuries at sea.

Watch Vest. So named because going up the 2 AM watch also meant you had to give up the vest. Waterproof outer, fleece lined inner provide warmth beyond imagining. But on the 2 AM watch, there are far finer things to imagine. Available in M, L, XL. \$49.99



Longbill Cap. Extra long, risen for low sun. Soft top for comfort and security in high winds. A fine seagull hat on all counts. Inappropriate for baseball. Available in M, L, XL. \$12.50



Capitain William McCoy
A. 1732

The True Story of Captain William McCoy

He was the smuggler who was renowned as an honest man. In times of Prohibition, when what was in the

Scotch bottle was frequently open to question, whatever sailed in with Cape William McCoy was guaranteed to be the genuine article.

It became known as "The Real McCoy." It was Cutty Sark, a Scots Whisky newly introduced to the Americas of the Roaring 20's. Looking for a champion, Cutty's makers had located the Captain off in the midnight seas of the North Atlantic, hiding his clippers from those who would throat him from his mission.

He was simply the very best, and Cutty Sark, the Real McCoy, became measured from the speckles of Chicago to the Eastern verandas of the very rich.

In the late 1920's, when he "kelt the sporting nature had left the game," William McCoy left as well.

He never looked back.

Some say he married a princess off the island of Fiji. Some say he joined the cause in the Spanish Civil War.

But his final cargo of Cutty Sark, stored safely in the holds of the *Arctura*, is known to have spread cheer on the seven seas for decades still to come.

CUTTY SARK



SCOTS WHISKY

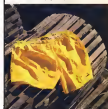
The Real McCoy

Work Sou'wester.

Triple wane, without the weight. Tough enough to let you do terrible things to it without feeling terrible afterwards. Yes, you can wear it to parties, but at least rough it up a little first. Available in M, L, XL. \$25.99



Shorts, yellow. What else to say about an immensely comfortable pair of wainwood shorts, other than men and women who wear them must be reminded to change into something else from time to time. Available in M, L, XL. \$19.99



Squall Shirt. For cotton twill comfort in the howl of the elements. Soft but tough fabric softens further with age, which is something to look forward to, since you'll probably have it for the next ten years. Available in M, L, XL. \$31.99



With his career reignited, the kid from Carneys Point, New Jersey, has a boys' night out in the big city. Old habits die hard. BY JAY McINERNEY

Bruce Willis in the Hot Zone

SINCE THE PLEISTOCENE, royalty have employed tasters to check for arsenic and excess MSG, but if you work for Bruce Willis, he gets to taste your food. "Lemme have a bite of your cheese-steak," he says to Avi Korein, his body-guard of eight years, after Avi makes a

run into Larry's Pizza, Steak, and Hoagie on the corner of Second and Chestnut in Philadelphia and returns to the black Suburban, laden with eats. Willis has ordered an Italian hoagie, but he wants to taste Avi's cheesesteak. Bruce is a guy who knows his cheesesteak, having

come out of Carnoy Point, New Jersey, less than an hour from Philly. Bruce, soon and a half" to what he rates *Av's* cheesecake. "Needs like 'I' earlier, he cast a predatory eye on the plate of Stephen Sade, his personal assistant. "What is this? Is that some kind of sausage?" Bruce asks, opening a few dials of chorizo.

Willis is in Philadelphia shooting *Tieke Menley*, a lead of ethnological Tennessee, directed by Jerry Gilman. He plays a twenty-first century convict who travels back in time in order to stop the spread of a deadly virus unleashed on the world by angry animal rights activists. Call it *The Greenhouse That rights shooting is done for the weekend, and we're headed to New York for a boy's night on the town, a little*

"The press are sick, venal, and stupid. I don't think the written word can compete with TV, so they try to be mean."



remember the last time I saw a cup wore this way, except by redheads and baldpates—can you tell by their hair that?—and I immediately asked Bruce two, maybe even three, style points for not pretending to be a sixteen-year-old hipster. Hutz are one of the themes of the weekend, never really a heavy guy to begin with—since *Mothership* left his dose for the weekend's peak what Gene Vincent did for the *Rock 'n' Roll* Willis has shared his *Rock 'n' Roll* Willis pants, and it's cold in hell. A black guy wearing pants so it is an occasion off Rancorous Square, wearing a truly nude dress, not to say badonazas, piece of badguy. Willis loses it

"Relax, give that guy ice looks for his hat," he says "Look at that. That is a spilling daypiece. He made that out of a purse or something."

A place called Club Corner also merits a moment of riff. "Club Corner, Bob speaking. How many people? Hold on, let me check. Hey, Benson, how those chicks looking?

Yeah? Good." No, no, doesn't, we got that."

A few minutes later "When, here we are, we're passing the hermitage of democracy, and there's the Presidential Museum. And the Old Sweden Church—put that on the list, Steve." Bruce's crew is keeping a list of things to see in Philadelphia when they get the zone. The Presidential Museum is at the top. Someone also Bruce didn't been presented with the keys to the city yet. "Nah, not yet. Didn't I get the keys to Pittsburgh?" he says, alluding to the filming of *Stinking Daniel*. "Actually, I don't think they could find the key to Pittsburgh—they gave me the garage-door opener to Pittsburgh."

IN THE HEADLINES, overthinking, gliding it by from over Jersey Willis looks down, eagerly scanning the terrain for landmarks of his youth. "That's Camden... There's the Cherry Hill Mall. I used to hang out at the Cherry Hill Mall." Willis grew up with two brothers and a sister in Carnoy Point—an industrial town on the Delaware River. His father was a welder. The son of worked briefly as a security guard at one of the chemical plants along the river. Popular enough to be elected student-council president his senior year, he was a class clown, working on the riff, a disruptive force. "I was trying to be funny all the time," Willis says. "A strict group of my classmates thought I was more interesting than anything in the classroom."

Willis does not care to speculate whether all his performing and jiving at school were related to turmoil at home, his parents split up when he was sixteen. And he had a serious trauma that began to go away only after he started acting. He admits to an unhappy adolescence. In his senior year, he was expelled for his role in what he calls "the annual riot, the black-white anti-human relations line." It was pretty exciting in the cafeteria—chairs flying, glass breaking. "He was out of school for three months."

One gets the impression that the bear thing about Carnoy Point, for Bruce Willis, was leaving. You don't have to close your eyes to see the wisened kid fighting his mother, walking the classroom for laughs.

PHILADELPHIA and Trenton disappear behind us, and we approach New Jersey, plummeting over Lady Liberty's torch, sliding past Ellis Island, seemingly aimed directly into the slot between the Twin Towers. "Look at that," Willis says. "What a fantastic city. I've seen a couple of days. Like Chicago. San Francisco is all right. But they're all trying to be this."

If Philadelphia once represented the larger world to the kid from Carnoy Point, Manhattan soon replaced it. For a couple of years, Willis attended Monmouth State College in northern New Jersey, where he began to act, and then he moved again to New York for auditions. After he got his part in an off-Broadway play his junior year, he dropped out and moved to Hell's Kitchen to be an actor-brother.

From the chopper, looking at the West Side heliport, we can almost see his old place—a hill-side walkway on Portny Street and Ninth Avenue. No problem spotting the new pad, "the sky crib," which takes up the top four floors of a tower on Central Park West, a mere mile and a half, ten years, and many millions of dollars away from Hell's Kitchen

WHAT'S THE MATTER with the dancers in the Chorus Grp? Is it something in the food? Two thirds of them seem afflicted with abnormally large goatees and bright laughter strangely syncopated body language that says, "I'm having a good time, a great time, in fact. I have a big smiling life, thanks, and I certainly don't notice any more stars in the vicinity," while a bluish intensity hovers unattended to the impale to whatever, more, and point (Chris Gled, Tiffney at it) it makes you sort of embarrassed and apologetic if you're sitting at the table, you want to say, *My dear sir, Naturally, my little something are a little under the skin. Though, of course, they aren't. And what is it like to inspect this kind of absurd behavior whenever you go?*

A young Asian woman approaches the table and bends over, brushing Willis's shoulder, thrusting a pen and paper in front of him. "Would you mind, Bruce? It's for my fan-club." Her note is confident, breezy, as if she collects right or ten celebrity autographs a day. As if to say, *My knowledge that you are. Apparently, her fan club also wants her to try to give Bruce a back rub with her tits.*

"Actually, I'm having a conversation here, and I'm sitting," Willis's tone is firm, rigorously reserved. "It is an imposition, actually if you want to wait and catch me after I've finished eating my dinner, don't you?" Over the course of the weekend, he signs half a dozen autographs, but not this one. "Everybody wants to be famous," Bruce observes. "I don't think it was like this twenty, thirty years ago. It's part of the whole decline of reading and literature. It's part of the television culture. Wouldn't it be a different world if you took the yearly revenue of all those daytime scandal shows and placed it in a literary fund?" Not also—I could see flying an helicopter on a regular basis. Plus three points for concept, minus two points for possible failure of the writer.

"Clear if I do the ordering," says Willis. *Av's* Kassar and Stephen Sade say it's cool with them. Each says Willis go way back—they worked together fifteen years ago at the stand Club Central. Each looks like a former heavy-metal band player, but in reality he's a former ballet dancer. He has been Willis's madpander for four years.

Willis orders six drinks and a tall club soda for himself. A once legendary systems, he quit drinking eight years ago. "I took me about two years to get my sense of humor back," he says. Asked how and why he quit drinking, he's quick to answer. "That's classified information which I am not allowed to reveal." It's a joke, sort of, but he definitely doesn't want to talk about it, except to say "I quit because I needed to quit. Having kids was kind of helpful in that." A real journalist, I suppose, would press the word press, but I owed three more style points for dignified scenery. How is it that Willis failed to tell the heartrending/warning story of his recovery to *People* magazine? He might have saved himself a another ride in the press if he had done the standard celebrity news culps, the I-used-to-smoke-and-druff-and-destroy-the-boozer-look-but-now-I'm-sober routine.

"Aside from Star Press in his *Shogun* *Seymour* days," remarks Chorus Trentano, "there is no one who has given worse press than Bruce." Willis responds, he definitely respects his sense of humor on the subject of the press. "They're sick, venal, and stupid, with no integrity," he says,

chewing into a lobster roll. "I don't think the written word can compete with the reality of modern television, so they try hard to be venal and mean."

Tom Cruise has been known to address journalists as sir, but Willis doesn't do humility all that well. His body language exudes aggressive confidence. He knows only one way to walk down the street—as if he owned it. "Deep at his core, I think he's very shy," says Glenn Carter, the *Mothership* co-creator who cast the awkward Willis, "and he became very shy to compensate." Friends will tell you his manner was exactly the same twenty years ago as it is today.

"Oh! Newman said, Fuck career," Willis notes, disarming on his feelings about being misinterpreted—though so far he's hardly been when anyone would call misinterpreted. "There's no update to sharing my most intimate thoughts with the guy with the pen." Oh, shut—that would appear to be me. I drop my *Mothership* irreverently and fumble for the chopsticks. It's a little disconcerting to find myself on this side of the same pad. Right about the same moment that Willis broke out of the West Side prison ghetto and became *Batball* but, I emerged from my down-town hotel with a manuscript that became a fairly successful book and began to discover the mixed joys of being the subject of magazine profiles and gossip-column interest. So on the smaller scale reserved for those tiny, bookish types like me, I can empathize. It's never a huge risk to see your ex-wives and girlfriends gazed about the sun of your art, advice or to know that your writer just phoned in your conversation to some dumb shit you magazine. But I can still count my misadventures—I don't think the *Star* or the *Dagblat* has ever been aware of my existence.

At this moment, John Goodman prepparently arrives with a friend. It's hard to say angry at anybody, even the press, with Goodman in the house. *The Remains* star is thinner than usual, smiling with both eyes half-closed, and his mouth-dressed like a preppy-shoreline in a crew-neck sweater and noed jacket. At various points in the evening, Goodman will break into a mocking pose and ask, "How do you like my jacket?" He's in town to host the *Easy* awards, which is one of the reasons Willis decided to fly up. They are friends from the old days when both were unknown actors. Last night, John was on *Lawman*. He showed a picture of me when I weighed my pounds, "Goodman says 'How come I didn't get laid more?'"

Willis and Goodman huddle at the far end of the table. Later, they swap Harley-Davidson keys. Willis has two keys, a 1987 Lowrider and a 1991 Customs Springer Kit on a Heritage Softail frame.

The party moves to the West Bank Cafe, over on Portny

Willis doesn't do humility all that well. He knows only one way to walk down the street—as if he owned it.



second Street, an old hangout. Goodman also had an apartment in a Hell's Kitchen tenement, which he points out as we are crossing down Ninth to the limousine. Inside the crowded club, Willis is nudged by Steve Olsen, the owner. Willis seems more relaxed, but even here the fun starts to circle, and you can see it in Goodman's eyes. The only time he looks unhappy is when he's being cased by an overly intense fan. A young blond taps Willis on the shoulder: "Hey, Bruce, you're very big on the Internet."

"Thanks, that's very good to know," says Bruce, smiling coolly and vaguely.

"You were great in *Pulp Fiction*." This is a judgment that even the critics seem to share. *At* twenty-two minutes of screen time, Willis's every performance squares a dose of raw animal vigor into the highly stylized movie-scapes of cool leather and black suits. And finally he finds himself in a film with art cred and box-office bang. Harvey Keitel first told Willis about the *Pulp* script. Willis got the script and met with Tarantino the next day. "I told him I'd like to be involved. Whatever part he wanted me to play. Originally, Bruce was written for a younger guy, a little more punky. I made it a guy who was at the end of the cycle."

Tarantino had thought of Willis for the role of Butch, but was told he would be doing the third *Die Hard*. An suspicious postponement of the *Die Hard* schedule left the star free to do *Pulp Fiction*. Tarantino, who call has the beach-leo manner of a fan, was thrilled. "He's the only contemporary actor who suggests the films," he says. "Ralph Manrique, Sterling Hayden, Robert Mitchum, Aldo Ray. Bruce has that offbeat, machismo look."

Bruce playing Butch made the role deeper. "Does Willis have a persona, a stock character he brings to the screen? I gesture toward guys who are less Berky who are underdogs." He pauses. "I like what Theodoros Moussis said: 'Talking about music is like dancing about architecture.' That's basically how I feel talking about acting."

Tarantino points to Willis's first appearance in the film—a money-second close-up reaction shot—as evidence of Willis's acting power. "I'd written this scene, with Marsellus talking and Butch watching. It's one thing to write it. But to have the actor who can do that—to hold the frame for a minute and a half—Bruce could do that. I would point the camera at him, and he can hold it without any of his screws or cues. That's why he's a star."

Unlike his costar John Travolta, Willis did not eagerly seek emergency career CPR when he met Tarantino. But his last three films had landed pretty reasonably. And unlike lesser stars, he was blamed for the failure. "If the movie flops," says Tarantino, "he takes the hit. The director moves on." After being the coolest guy on TV, he was losing respect overnight. Willis still sees himself, in his happiest moments,

as the guy who did *Sam Shepard off-Broadway*, and he has been one of the few major male stars to dominate his own adventure roles with supporting roles in risky films like *Blue in the Face* and *Mind-Trap*. But the public won't necessarily admire *Superfucker*. Richard Linklater, director of *Before Sunset*, invited Tarantino to screen *Pulp Fiction* at a coffeehouse in Austin, Texas, the virtual hometown of Generation X. "When the credits roll, the kids start booing Bruce Willis," Tarantino recalls. "Then when Bruce goes back to save Marsellus, there was a standing ovation. He totally won over that Austin coffeehouse, stalker, hippie crowd."

Bruce liked it, too. He says *Pulp Fiction* is his best work to date. If his satisfaction is mirrored by the fact that he was left out of the Oscar lobbying campaign, he's not letting on. But then, it's hard to imagine the Academy giving passing bad-boy Willis an Oscar at this particular moment.

NEXT STOP for the boys is the Chula Club, another present and former hangout. Willis and crew are escorted to a booth. Bartender Jack Paulson comes over to say hello. Headlocks are exchanged. "He taught us how to tend bar," says Steve. A young woman in a leopard-print mini tries to leap into Willis's lap. "How about a picture, Bruce?" A girl gets her way. For a guy who stands about eight and a half feet tall, Art has a surprisingly delicate touch in deflating the more insistent women. Goodman, meanwhile, is having trouble at the bar. A very perky brunette wants to dance. "I don't dance," says John.

He is polite and shy, which only increases the would-be dancer's determination, as if she believes that she is persisting for Goodman's own good. He keeps dodging them all night long, these girls who seem to see something in his face that is crying out to them. In contrast to Willis's somewhat daunting, wary, and self-assured demeanor, Goodman's expression seems inviting. You get the idea he hates to say no but will do anything he can to slide away or pretend he doesn't notice them. Willis, on the other hand, refuses to be intimidated and doesn't feel bad about being govt with anyone stepping into his space, whether first or photograph. At the moment, he is hanging with his old buds in the booth, trying not to look out at the circling pools of poisonous from the outer boozehall. Maybe, for a minute, it feels like old times—like a last night on the Upper West Side in 1981.

WILLIS HAS MANAGED to keep many of the friends he knew from the days before he was famous, so much so that membership in a fraternity of guys who tended bar on the Upper West Side in the early eighties. "There was a feeling of camaraderie," says Willis's friend Joey Flawa, another Jersey boy who hung with Willis in New York and who preceded him to L.A. "There was an Oakland Raider kind of thing: once you're on the team, you're never off the team."

Mr. Chula: He never moved through, so never tangled with the law. "I quit because I needed to quit. Having kids just kind of clinched it."



"There's probably the biggest actress here right now," Willis says of her cousin.



Linda Fiorentino and her sister lived with Willis for months. They all shared a bed. It was platonic. Honest.



Plews, now a music-video producer, was sending her at Raft's when he met Willis, aka Bruce, who was behind the bar at the Cafe Central. If the latter wasn't quite Mac's Kamasutra, the now-defunct nightclub on Amsterdam Avenue was the Upper West Side's hot winginghole of the moment. "Chris would be there," says Plews, who insists that he once introduced me to Bruce, though neither one of us quite remembers the details. "Kevin Bacon was doing *Sub Zero* on Broadway. David was always there. Sting. You'd have this mix of men of models and actors and wannabes."

Aspiring actor Willis met plenty of equity-card holders like Gene and Mickey Rourke," he says.

"They'd come around John Hurt and Peter Weller were hanging out and starting to get work. I was able to watch these guys and see how to behave and how not to behave. Some people took the up-and-coming movie star thing for a big deal and some people saw through the hype." At Cafe Central, according to his buddies, Willis was a star in his own right, riling, cracking jokes, and occasionally threatening to crack heads, though he was still struggling by day to get his pants & visa, and still in a boy's club. One of the few women who was a close friend of Willis at the time was Linda Fiorentino, the star of *The Last Seduction*. "Linda and her sister Terry lived in my apartment for some months. They came in the bar one day and said they'd been evicted from their apartment, so I said, 'You can stay in my crib.' But we were just friends. I didn't really have a lot of girl/friend." Bruce says they all slept in the same bed. "It was strictly platonic. Honest."

"If there was anybody who knew how to have fun," says Plews, "it was Bruce. He cranked an electric looking, warming everybody around him to have fun. The talent in New York, falling into a cab at five in the morning, you know we were there for that life. We were always wondering, How far around the corner is my real life?"

WILLIS'S REAL LIFE began to come together when he was cast in Stan Sheppard's *Real for Love*, off-Broadway in 1986. On the strength of that part, he managed to get an agent. Visiting Los Angeles to audition for *Disorderly Solving Susan*, he stayed over an extra day to read for the pilot of a TV show starring Cybill Shepherd. Willis was chosen by series creator Glenn Caron over three thousand other actors and over the howling protests of ABC network executives, who didn't want an unknown. "Technically, he was one of only three actors who could do it," says Caron. "The combination of tough

and tender is extremely rare. You think of Reagan, you think of Bill Holden. Had it not been Moonlighting, had it not been me, somebody else would have discovered him."

As David Addison, Willis became a star. And he became famous for being difficult. After *seven* four episodes of *Moonlighting*, Willis was a fortress to the studio—no access for alleged blowups on the set and wild behavior off the set—and he was, he admits, sick of playing the same character, sick of television, sick of the scenery. *Real* life seemed very far away. "I always used to think I could go back to being anonymous," he says, "and when I realized it wasn't going to go away, it was akin to realizing you're going to die someday."

The bad old days culminated in 1991 in a famous Memorial Day bust, when a celebrity-photo cop, responding to a complaint about loud music at Willis's Hollywood Hills house, arrested Willis and several of his buddies. That July, Bruce met Demi Moore at a screening for *Selena*, starring her on-and-off boyfriend, Emilio Rivera. In November, Willis and Moore were married in Las Vegas. Bruce got Moore's suspicious style points from me for asking Moore from River, who was trying to seal my own girlfriend at the time.

ONE IN THE MORNING at the Chris Club and Bruce is ready to call it quits. (Minus cheer for yawning and looking at his watch.) One of his buddies is wearing rhapsodic about the new bartender at Frederick's, unshakable—we absolutely have to go see her—but Willis is best. "It's not as much fun as it used to be," he admits, what with sobriety and the constant hum of fans. Time-travel doesn't seem to be feasible outside of the movies. Taking out of his luncheon at the sky crib, he offers the car to those who might still be reckless—who might want to check out the bartender/model at Frederick's. Nice. I'd say that brings him back up two points.

The next day, Sunday, he settles around the sky crib, channel-surfing between basketball, John Waters's *Cry-Baby*, and *Saturday Night Live*, that pop-cultural landmark featuring Willis's July-1986 cameo, what's his name?—the one who was nominated for Best Actor. Sadly, there is no O.J. action today, no Judge Lance Igoe fodder for the rail.

The crib is one of those fantasy Manhattan apartments that seem to exist only in Woody Allen movies, improbably inhabited by behemoths. A penthouse quadruple—it, that even a word—is it the former apartment of vaudevillean Eddie Cantor and one-acture (yes, even Robert Segalwood, producer of *Saturday Night Live* [Madonna, on the other hand, couldn't even get in the building, which must make everyone here feel a little stranger and sadder]). Every window presents vertiginous views of the city just across the way in the south tower of this prewar landmark, not fifty feet away from me, a Sherry's John, who owns the other penthouse, wearing a bathrobe, frowning back at me as Bruce Willis's living room, thinking, *Shit, ten million plus for this place and some fucking guy is gawking at me in my bathrobe.*

In Segalwood's time, the fourth floor of Willis's apartment was a mirrorball, complete with revolving, mirrored disco ball. One shudders to imagine the rot—the mirrors, the Douglas doors, the brass-and-glass tables. The apartment is

Out of the wild: Even back in his bartending days, when he was cracking jokes and heads, Willis always had the street and the movie.



new dimension in the caper, informal style that is the semiregular look of the New Hollywood amnesia-club Rockley poets, far sates on thick Private capers. It's a little too neat and perfect to suggest home. Willie and Jodie are based, similar as they are based anywhere, at a ranch in the great western state of let's call it Wyoming. That's where the kids go to school, where Willis and Moore go between films, where he spent most of the nine months he took off before the current spate of movies, which began with *Pulp Fiction*.

Major meat for the tabloids, Willis is understandably protective of his private life. "Too much powder of being a father than being an actor" (Those points for the moment, but I am forced to deflect live big points for momentary delight). When he does speak of his wife, it is with undying fondness. "Don't probably the biggest across there is right now," he says with a kind of awe. On the subject of her notorious pregnant-made cover photo for—what's it called?—*Q* magazine magazine, he leaps unhesitatingly to the defense.

"I looked up to Richard Gere and Mickey Rourke. I watched them to see how to behave and how not to behave."



Young Bruce's counterpart generates an image of Bruce Willis, which is all the boy's experience see. At various points in the scene, the amnesia yields to love-struck shots of Bruce Willis, saving the world as usual.

BRUCE DECIDES he needs a new bag. Naturally. "I gotta get a bag, I need a duffel bag." He thinks he remembers a sleep on Broadway dedicated to bags. But when we take a walk over to Macy's, it seems that the bag store is no longer there. Traffic on Broadway slows down as Bruce speeds up. A guy in a van is hanging out the window, shouting, "Bruce! Bruce Willis!"

Willis runs into traffic, dodging the slow-moving cars. "You're losing your timing," he chides Steve, who is not

keeping up. "You're losing your timing. I used to really have that down, that New York walk." Willis still has a pretty convincing New York strut, though it helps that when he walks directly into traffic, the cars slow down in order to get a better look at him. His very movie-star presence changes the streetscape. Willis takes a pass on some expensive leather bags—"too big for a bag"—before we find a store on Amsterdam that has exactly the kind of cheap duffel bag he's looking for, a green canvas number with tan trim marked at \$49.95.

"What's your best price on that first bag?" Willis asks the proprietor, a middle-aged Chinese man.

"Fifty dollar."

"No, but what's your extra-special price today?"

"Price matched. I give you forty-nine dollar ninety-five."

"How about forty?"

"Already discount. See here? Forty-nine."

"You drive a hard bargain."

"You look like some."

"Yeah, I'm Mickey Rourke."

IN THE LIMOLIMBO on the way back to the hotel, peering down Broadway, we pass the former site of O'Neil's Ballroom, which sparks a memory. "I remember walking down the street in the snow, cars abandoned by the side of the road. I'd stop in at the bar along the way and get a martini, some up at the bartender took care of each other. The P and K, the All Stars, O'Neil's Ballroom." Willis's smile is uncharacteristically rural; the snow all drained out of it. But just when you're thinking he might be needing a hunkie-wad trying to decide whether to add or subtract a couple of points for nostalgic rooming—we come up on Bender's deli, and he laughs. "Bender's—that was always the last stop. You'd be with some girl... that was the fluorescent-light room. See how they look outside the nightclub. They baby, let's go get some chocolate milk, yeah, stop inside here for a minute." He flashes the crooked, sideways smile.

WHILE IN the helicopter, over the Hudson, heading back to Philly. The world's only true man-made skyline, which Bruce owns a little piece of, recedes behind us. "There's only four basic movies they can write about you," Bruce shouts to us. "One. You hit the street. Two. You peak. Three. You bomb. And four. You come back."

I've lost track of my own personal point-scoring system, so let's just say that is basically a number four. After several more crashes, Willis is definitely about, riding high over the industrial scrubland, the malls and highways and chemical plants of his native state. As work the other Bruce from New Jersey, his lost chips seem to derive from his origins down there, to connect with the underdogs, to suggest that he is still, in his heart—as in his caper—as one of the boys on the boardwalk. And that's pretty much the way he seems in person—like the funny, tough kid from school whom you liked but were a little intimidated by—the teacher's nuisance, the alpha dog of the gay pack.

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What Makes Sammy Walk?

BABY-BOOM SLACKERS ARE LEADING US INTO A FUTURE OF EXIT STRATEGIES, "VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY," AND THE END OF THE WORK ETHIC AS WE KNOW IT

By Randall Rothenberg

IN NORTHGATE, A SEATTLE neighborhood of sturdy homes and limitless vistas, a support group meets twice a month to help its members through the emotionally wrenching, physically demanding withdrawal from addiction. Among them tonight are an accountant, a college administrator, a computer-company founder, and a state-government employee. They are not dependent on drugs, alcohol, sexual relationships, or the other themes of twelve-step programs. These thirteen men and women are seeking release from their reliance on jobs.

"My name is David," says one. He is forty-two, a compact man with neatly trimmed brown hair, dressed casually in a sweatshirt and jeans. "My intent is in getting out of the rat race and getting back to simplicity. I think it's a matter of time—not if but when I can do it." To prepare himself, he's deliberately stopped reporting or replacing broken household appliances. "The dryer popped out, and we can do without the dryer," he says to approving nods.

A young woman follows. She is sitting on a couch, under a bookshelf on which newscasters with names like *The Nightstand Gazette* and *Simple Living* are neatly displayed. "My name is Laura," she says, twisting her fingers nervously. "I've decided to quit my job."

"Clear!" barks the older-haired man next to her.

Unbowed, she continues. "I'm gonna quit my job in June. It's not really that hard." For months already, she and her boyfriend have been living on one income and banking the second. "So I'm gonna quit my job," Laura repeats, trying to convince herself. "I'll get all my 'arse back."

Finally eyes turn to David Henderson. He and his wife, Joanne Ellis, forty-nine and forty-five, respectively, tell, calm and strident, are students and stars of this group.

"My name is Dave and I'm married to Joanne, and we've been on a voluntary-simplicity trade for close to four years now, and it worked out," he tells his confidants. "We went through a heavy-duty yuppie phase in the mid-to-late eighties, like many people did." But after realizing their folly they went on a rigid program to control their spending and en-

pared their savings. "We succeeded in reaching financial independence one year ago." At about the same time, U. S. West, where Ellis had served as several executive jobs throughout seventeen years, offered him a buyout. Naturally he took it.

"I haven't worked since. In a regular job I should say I have, very voluntarily and unapologetically, rebuilt my bicycle. I did all the work myself," he says proudly. "But I got the frame for free."

DO YOU HAVE a Barnes & Noble bookstore near you, one of those giant book emporiums, replete with coffee shops, art chairs, and howl-at magazine racks? Stroll around one some afternoon and check out how many of its plush sofas are occupied—and by whom. A lot of people are re-

turning," notes Jan Kirk, a Barnes & Noble vice president. "A lot who were going a thousand miles an hour in the eighties are now saying, 'Let's go thirty miles an hour.'"

Or perhaps you have a newsicle coffee shop in your neighborhood—not the modern move-on-and-move-on-out kind, but one of the *Parade* set-up variety popping up of late. Live noise whiffs passing over the screaming latte and the morning paper in the hours before noon?

Chances are that, dined among the expected regulars—the middle-aged, the urban students, and the elderly—one third of the diners are men, middle-class, middle-aged, and jostling around Men who in another life, were surgeons, financial planners, sales executives, attorneys, bankers, administrators, and assorted executives. White-collar men, "the interchangeable parts of the big chains of authority that bind the society together," the late sociologist C. Wright Mills called them. Men like you. Men who should be working. But aren't.

Every week, a sunset, I run into an old friend, sometimes two or three—by Lessemers in their late thirties or forties, comfortable but fit, from rubs—who have departed the fast track. Whether they were pushed or not, their reasons have been strikingly similar. After a list of soul-searching, some angry and perhaps a tiny bit of self-lacerating, they have decided to remain in the slow lane. First it was Peter, Princeton II A, and Harvard Law Review, who went on hourly wages and then went part-time at his West Coast firm in order to study history. Then there was Rob, who, fired by his investment bank, decided to work part-time, or, contrarily, so that he might daily with a publisher several mornings a week. Al, who'd spent the years after his M.B.A. and law degree planning international real-estate investing from the field, followed from the field. Before making any move, he's taking at least a year off to spend time with his infant daughter; even so his wife began her new life as a physical therapist.

They may accept the cultural quagmire—yuppie versions of James Dean's caustic hermit, Antonio's Organization Man ethos—but it's not merely the economically and ethically morally neutral who are joining the three-lessemers brigade. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of otherwise normal men are banding together in a mass inquiry that defies easy explanation. They are not running out. They are not leaving. But they are dropping out.

Last July a Gallup poll found that some one-third of all



What's the road? Joanne Ellis and David Henderson make up the morning commuters go by.

Americans and they would take a 20 percent cut in income if they or their spouses could work fewer hours, an extraordinarily high figure. More useful thinking? When IBM offered employees a departure package in mid-1993, more than thirty-two thousand of the winging warriors—to protect more than management had anticipated—took the buyout.

All around us are the unmistakable signs of a shift in the American character. Instead of working harder at times get tougher, men including the salaried stock troops that sustain the corporate world, are working less.

For several years—even as their wives and sisters have continued on the trek toward new homes for higher pay—men have been drifting away from work. At first, the departures were involuntary, forced almost solely by the continuing disappearance of factory jobs as microchips replaced muscles. In recent years, with corporate downsizing devastating the one fourth of American workers classified as managers and professionals, some experts have begun to notice a surge in voluntary departures.

"This has been going on among a core group of leadership boomers, and some older than the boomers, probably since the early seventies. The difference now is that it's going mainstream," says Gerald Celenza, director of the Trends Research Institute in Rhinebeck, New York. "What's going on now is a lot of people's minds is, 'Lord, I'm working longer and harder, I'm falling back, I have my job, I don't know if I'm going to have a job—I don't want to do this anymore!'"

In the post-Timothy Leary world, this leaving-kind lifestyle is no longer referred to as dropping out. Some economists speak of "downshifting," the pursuit and acceptance of slower days and lower pay. Others talk of a "voluntary-simplification movement." Still others call it a search for "core strategies." In editorial fashion, a respected New York trend-analysis company says the desire "to take flight from current employment predicaments has become pandemic."

It is evident in many varied phenomena. You can find a line of six in the Arco and Crafts-style antiques, lamps, coffee tables, and couches that the House Company, the nation's premier shopping-center developer, placed throughout the public space of Adema's Remerick Mall to make it more appealing to people with time on their hands. It's in the baby-changing facilities Barnes & Noble has placed in the men's restrooms of its superstores. And it's in the proliferation of newsletters like *Living Cheap* News of San Jose, California; *Simpler News* of Palm Harbor, Florida; and

Simple Living of Seattle—written for folks with empty schedules and shoddy salaries (One such theorist, *The Tightwad/Thrifty* of Levens, Maine, has grown to fifty thousand subscribers from a mere seven-figure haul in less than five years).

Since called from government, industry, and think tanks point to an astonishing transformation in the nature of work, which we were to associate with eight-hour days at offices or factories. The number of men on their traditional prime working years—early twenties to early thirties—who worked full-time for at least eight out of ten years fell nine percentage points from the 1960s to the 1980s. The increase that followed can only have added to their malaise, pulling the current number of "full-time full-timers" below 70 percent of American men. Of those employed, fully one fourth work on a temporary, contract, or part-time basis, according to the Economics Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. Link Resources Corporation, a technology research company, says the total number of Americans who work at least part of the time at home, for themselves or for their employers, rose to 45.1 million in 1994 from fewer than 25 million just eight years ago.

Less than 70 percent of U.S. men are now full-time year-round workers.



CURT SCHORIN Life at the espresso house.

Like a cat or not, men by men, modern by modern, we are becoming a freelance nation. We are transient, nomadic, but we are also, as the word implies, free.

"This whole simple-living phenomenon seems to be marginal, but it's growing. It seems to be exploding," says Harvard economist Juliet B. Schor. The nation's leading center of divergency, Schor, in her 1993 book, *The Overworked American*, calculated that between 1969 and 1991, the average employed person put in an extra 10 1/2 hours a year on the job. It's a telling sign that her newer study, which began in February as designed to establish how many Americans are laying back, and why they're doing so.

In pursuit of deposits, Schor distributed a notice at a Massachusetts unemployment center for white-collar workers established along the Boston city high-tech corridor. "The respondents told her similar tales. 'Their jobs were too stressful. They were unexciting. They were searching for meaning,'" Schor recalls. "So they found other, lower-paying jobs, or they got themselves fired. They were no longer playing ball."

"Most had new jobs or situations that paid much less," she continues, "but they were much happier."

In that euphoria lies perhaps the most consequential and troubling aspect of men's move to the sidelines. We were raised to labor to honor virtue and avert the profit motive. For skilled, educated, and experienced people to find

contentment in the absence of effort denotes a historical alchemy in the meaning of work and a change in the importance of the work ethic in a nation whose willingness to toil distinguished it from the antecessors from which our forebears fled. It also indicates an abandonment of the American dream by the people who have benefited from it the most. We are asking ourselves why we should work so hard, if focus beyond our control are determining our fate, we are answering by curbing jolt, consuming less, and opting out.

We are becoming, in short, a nation of middle-aged slackers.

"It's going to be the political issue of the future," says David Fowler, the noted public-opinion analyst. "You Gingrichenize this."

DAVE MITCHELLER and Jacque (pronounced "Jackie") Blaz make a handsome couple. Thin and robust, they seek of Seattle with good bodies shaped by long summer days as mountain-bike paths and interpretive meals beset by real-world problems.

Dave used to work. His father—who had ended his way up from engineer to supervisor to estimator at a Washington military installation—followed his son with a strong drive. "Black, I was moving lawn and had a paper route when I was in the ninth grade," says Dave. "I worked my way through college." After a first job that lasted seven years, he ended up, to his growing comfort, at the telephone company.

His life was not one of unmitigated bounty. In 1971, his first wife died. Left with an eleven-year-old daughter, he began to rebuild his existence. Buying things—a boat, cars, sports equipment—provided some solace. But not so much as did Jacque, an engaging woman whom he noticed at a New Year's Eve party in 1974 and married two years later. Jacque had moved to Seattle from northern California to chase a promising career in telecommunications. The industry had already helped her through a crash, divorce and being in a tiny apartment with his young son, she had agreed on with Pacific Telephone and doubled her income.

"It was a revelation, it was wonderful, it was probably one of the best things that ever happened to me," Jacque smiles in bittersweet, grateful tones. "Now I must frequently stop at all the time. I had a little boy. I could sit out of him."

Things got even better when she married Dave. "Blow, you and Dave are going to have such a great life," her mother told her. "You're both making lots of money. This is going to be great!"

And it was. They drove a Jeep Cherokee and an Audi 5000. They swam in Hawaii, staid in Tahoe, and water-skied in the local days. When the kids finished high school, Dave and Jacque sold their home in suburban Inglewood and purchased a four-bedroom house in the city. Dave's job provided more fulfillment. Six months after the wedding, he got his chance to move from direct client sales into a covered product-management job. In 1989, he was promoted again

and accepted hobnobbing with execs from the other regional bell companies. "Suddenly, everything was new," he says of that time. "New opportunity. I was learning new things, thinking I was happy."

Something, though, began to gnaw at Jacque. At first, it was simply the thought, she maybe the job wasn't for her. Although a costly conversation, she didn't consider her self-empowering enough for the career in working and sales that the phone company was offering her last. When she moved into the voice-line network design group, she began to joke that for fun, her colleagues almost all men, used this language. She started feeling trapped, then miserable. She decided going to work. "I was bound to the job because of the amount of money I was making," Jacque says. "It was an ego thing at first. I didn't want to take a step back. The bad part was, I had to do all these things that weren't me."

In the spring of 1988, she took a leave from her job to study for a Ph.D. in communications and to sort out her conflicting feelings. But the transition still wasn't enough. She started having forbidden thoughts—thoughts that made her feel good—about leaving her job for good. But her guilt was overwhelmed by a more powerful urge. "I wanted to do something meaningful for me." She had heard that a "simplicity circle," a group devoted to exploring lower stress, lower-cost lifestyles, was starting in her neighborhood. She decided to check it out.

It was a mixed group—single men and women but mostly couples. Some were older folks who'd lived through the Depression, some were young urban professionals trying, like Jacque, to find meaning in a work-weary world. It wasn't long, though, before the conversations turned from cultural to practical matters. Jacque met couples who had managed to stop working altogether and had survived, even thrived. Eventually, she came to see one woman and told Dave, "Lord, this stuff is important. You've got to come."

Dave was ready for the message. The comfort provided by his rise up the corporate ladder was proving to be brief. "I got to talking to people at the other Bellco and thinking, 'hey, they're as screwed up as I am.' When I see," says Dave, "talking to people, everyone saw the handwriting on the wall. IBM was starting laying people off. All these big corporations were going through the throes of reorganization. Where was this going?" Especially after Jacque quit her job and began contemplating a new career as a college teacher, he began to worry that his company's unprofitability might translate into his plans. He agreed to think about other forms of employment, in order to prepare himself to follow his wife.

Soon, Dave and Jacque found the New Road Map Foundation.

The organization was started by a former New York financial analyst and an actress who had moved to Seattle and reduced their living costs to about 20 percent year each. The two, Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin, had put together an audio-tape series—subsequently turned into a best-selling book called *Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship with Money*

Great Moments in Prime-of-Life Slacking

1200 a.m.
Adrian returns to his job.



535 a.m.
Jacque leaves her apartment, but not before taking a nap.



6:00 a.m.
Dave goes to work, begins spiritual quest.



4:45 p.m.
Dave returns, feeling "The Moment" of his life, a sense of crisis, a sense of wonder.



10:45 p.m.
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and *Adelphi* wanted independence—to instruct others who similarly wanted to downsize. Their message was as subjective as it was radical. “The material progress that was supposed to live as his left as more ennobled,” they said. “For all the boys about going for the gold,” we’re sorry to say at the end of the day that going for the gold is as good as it gets.” Out back on spending, marriage, existing financial resources, and they preached, “if you choose, you may work for money for only a finite period of time.”

Perhaps in another place, Dave and Jacque would have dismissed that message as the mere call of latters. The Pacific Northwest, however, with its snowcapped mountains, sequestered forests and sequestered islands, evokes the overworked to radicalize to escape factories. Indeed, “voluntary simplicity” has become such a fad on the local scene that the Seattle Public Library even prepared a resource list for those wishing to downsize their lifestyles. Bibliography of literary accounts, consumer tests, lifestyle handbooks, essays, and historical renderings (book numbers included). Among the books available for lending: *Time Out How to Take a Year for Mom or Dad Off* by Bonnie Miller Rubin; *How to Survive Without a Salary* by Charles Long; *Simplify Your Life* by Elaine St. James; *Wintery Simplicity* by Diane Elgin; *Remember Your Life* by Stephanie Culp; *How to Get off the Fast Lane* by M. M. Kirsch; and, of course, the bible, *Star Menorah for Life*.

For Dave and Jacque, it seemed natural, perhaps, and fitting to try the New Road Map Foundation's new-step program. They determined their exact net worth. They recorded every expenditure in tiny notebooks. They canceled their cable television subscription and sold their second car. Dave began asking the bus to work, Jacque started bicycling to school. They got rid of the bus. Dave even sold his beloved water skis. Then the couple moved from their 2,000-square-foot house to a 650-square-foot apartment. It was a watershed when U.S. West mailed Dave the buyout offer. They no longer needed even one salary.

Their retirement resources have been raised, Jacque's parents, her father especially, believe they've gone "temporarily insane." Dave's daughter, now twenty-three, thinks their exit strategy is a concept available only to the dead. “You don't have a social life anymore, and you don't do anything anymore,” she tells them.

But by all appearances, they are content with their lot. Jacque is glowing toward the completion of her doctorate. Dave spends his days cycling, read-

ing, writing, doing data entry for Jacque's dissertation, and performing odd jobs around his parent's house. These activities, which constitute entirely of interest on a spouse's net pay, is less than a third of what it was when they collectively put in more than one hundred hours a week.

“This will sound funny,” says Dave as he unapologetically pours me a glass of cheap gay wine, “but we're actually looking forward to being in the 19 percent tax bracket for the first time in our lives.”

“You don't have a social life,” Dave's daughter says, “and you don't do anything.”



THE DOWNSIZERS: Happy in New York.

IN MORE to ancient and trapping, the call to shun work and drop out lives in “this bustling materialism,” Henry David Thoreau found a ready audience for his message that toil was enslaving the American mind. “Men labor under a mistake,” he wrote in *Walden Pond*. “The better part of a man is soon plowed into the soil for compost. By a sowing fate, commonly called society, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasure which moth and rust will consume and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it.”

Thoreau notwithstanding, it would be a mistake to assume that were it not for the drumbeat of commercialism and its appeals to our vanity, we would readily accept a state of asceticism. Thoreau's example has consequences. “To a healthy mind,” James Russell Lowell wrote of him shortly after his death, “the world is a constant challenge.” Such words underscored that, absent from the beginning, the character of Americans was distinguished from that of our European antecedents not by a search for leisure and contemplation but by our willingness to work and seek the rewards.

“The workman,” wrote Tocqueville of his travels across this new nation, “is filled with new ambition and new desires, he is harassed by new wants. Every instant his views with longing the profits of his employer, and in order to share them, he strives to dispose of his labor at a higher rate, and he generally is caught in the snare.”

As the decades wore on, Thoreau's message of self-reliance was blended into this obsession to risk acquisition and induced into the American dream, which could be summarized in four words: Work and get rich.

The classic expression of this reverie sat prominently on my parents' livingroom bookshelf throughout my childhood: It was a thin volume titled *Acme of Diamonds* a reprint of a meandering lecture that was delivered more than six thousand times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Russell H. Conwell, a Baptist minis-

ter and the founder of Temple University in Philadelphia. In the speech, Conwell recounted the apocryphal story of Alva Heford, a Russian farmer who was persuaded by a priest that fabled riches lay somewhere beyond the mountains of his domain. For years, Alva Heford roiled fire and brick to find the treasure, eventually selling his farm to finance the expedition, educating himself and dying a broke and broken man. Not long after Alva Heford's death, the farmer who had bought his land was leading a contented life when a glimmer caught his eye. And there he discovered the acres of diamonds right in Alva Heford's own backyard.

Conwell meant his lesson loudly. The lecture is filled with inspiring stories of entrepreneurs who searched their own environs and found fabulous wealth. The man who made \$100,000 inventing a better harpin, the fellow who made \$200,000 developing rock candy. “If you say ought to be rich, you have no right to be poor,” Conwell thundered to the multitudes. “You and I know there are some things more valuable than money. Nevertheless, the man of common sense also knows that there is not any one of those things that is not greatly enhanced by the use of money. Money is power.” It is no wonder that with such sentiments, *Acme of Diamonds* to this day remains a favorite motivational volume, cited in life-insurance sales pitches and in Army conventions.

Luckily, that work ethic coincided with the needs of industrial capitalism. Competitive success required firms continually to increase their productivity—their ability to get fewer workers to turn out more goods in less time, which meant production cheaper and, therefore, more profitable. As major corporations took over the management of the American economy, the workers who made this nation the most productive the world had ever seen were rewarded with an implied social contract: higher wages and lifetime job security for more and harder work. “What makes the economy function well,” Herbert Bernstein, the head of President Nixon's Council of Economic Advisors once said, “is that a hundred million people get up every morning and go to work, doing the best job they can under the conditions they are in.”

The bargain was a good one for America in the fifteen years following the end of World War II, family income doubled. “Middle class,” a term that applied to only a third of the nation at the start of the war, referred to two thirds by the mid-1950s.

As material comfort became a given, Americans found fulfillment in the social context their professions and professional accreditations provided. “Satisfaction is work of men rests upon status satisfaction,” C. Wright Mills wrote in the 1950s. “Status panic,” he believed, had become an integral motivation for people to work in the white collar world. The idea provided vigorous support for his thesis: success showed this magazine, an avatar of the new work ethic, on its February 1951 cover, above a photo of a young man, his head tilted flying, his backside thrusting slightly to his chest. “It is the religion of the eighties. Everyone pursues it. Only the most driven and talented

achieve it. Few know how to live with it. Or without it.”

Today, it all seems so dated. Daniel Yankelovich's annual BYO Scan trend tracking study unconcerned striking disaffection from work, with employees routinely expressing grave doubts about their future, their employer's loyalty to them, the value of accrued professional experience, and even the health care of the American work ethic—that work can set you free from want in less than ten years—any concept he happened, either in our character or our conscience, to spend the work ethic.

In large part, this development has arisen because work provides workers with fewer real rewards. Even though the economy rose in its third adult year of recovery, a booming, the benefits have been manifested almost entirely in the creation of new jobs, not in the improvement of existing ones. Real wages have declined in almost every sector of the economy since 1970, according to a McKinsey analysis of Labor Department data. Benefits, too, are disappointing. Defined-benefit pensions—retirement plans that guarantee fixed payments from departure to death—covered 84 percent of workers as recently as 1970. Today, slightly more than half of all workers have their future thus secured.

In the aftermath of the recession, we are witnessing a gradual downward revision of expectations about accumulating material wealth to achieve success, says Yankelovich. “People are lowering their expectations about what they can get out of their jobs. They are putting their emotional investment into values and lifestyles that depend less on work and money.”

Mark Baran, changed his investment portfolio a few months ago, joining the two million men who the U.S. Census Bureau says are now serving as full-time fathers. I came across his name in a newsletter called *Ad-Hom*, Dad, a publication filled with supportive musings (“where Dad's have another look”) and practical advice (“get sitting for profit”).

A thirty-seven-year-old former motorcycle-wreck salesman from Sharon, Massachusetts, Mark started working two years ago with his wife, Andrea, about adding to their brood. They already had a three-year-old son and part-time custody of Mark's twelve-year-old son from a previous marriage. They cultivated the calm, psychic and physical. He met Andrea, a rising finance company executive, heard what Mark called “the mistress in the morning—poking lunches, who's gonna get home if the kid is sick. You walk in at 6:00 p.m. and you spend the whole night doing housework, packing kids up, making lunches for the next day. Nine o'clock at night, you collapse. And when you finish trying to do your eyes, instrumental depression, trying to do for the kid, lunches on the road, dry cleaning—now it's worth it.” Out of Mark's salary, three in the mid forties, they were left with \$6,000 to \$8,000 after taxes.

Instead of sacrificing the joy of another baby, they decided to join Mark's job. “We said, ‘It's worth it now!’ No busy, sure, but not for us.”

The conservatives now controlling Congress claim



1928

Elvis
Shimmer
embodies the
La-Say
medium.

1936

Edward G. Robinson
shows for “the most I love.”



1938

Isolated of
legend, Verónica
de la Cruz
picks the
Dobson.



1959

Placing of
young “Begin
the Beguine.”
Actor Dave
wings the
chariot.



1966

David
Berenson
Barry Gold
declares, “It
is a double in
its field.”



1966

Barry Gold
says, “It is
a double in
its field.”



1972

Atta
George
Baudry
says, “It is
a double in
its field.”



1977

John Bullitt
shows
“Mugshot”



that the domination of the work ethic is entirely an underclass problem and put the blame on the system. The counterculture is a momentary aberration in American history that will be looked back upon as a quiet period of benevolence brought to the national elite," says House speaker Newt Gingrich.

But the former southern New England district manager for the Ridge Tool Company—who has been staying at home with his new baby girl and her older brother and half brother for about six months now and is, obviously, neither quaker nor also an abolitionist—sees it differently. "If this were the 1950s, I wouldn't be caught dead doing this," says Mark Brown.

In the meantime, he knows he is in good company. There is a former police officer in his neighborhood who took early retirement and now spends his days earning for his usual children and selling model fer tracks out of his basement. There's also another like-minded father whose five-year-old's day care center

"I'm going to introduce myself to him," Mark says. "I need someone to talk football with."

TO THE DEGREE that it's possible for an entrepreneur to exploit such a social reversal, Cecile Andros has done so. A lively woman in her mid-fifties, Cecile is the leading influence behind the Seattle simplicity circle that hand Dave Hummel and Jacques Blais to their new life.

The director of continuing education at a local community college, Cecile had first tried to offer a workshop on voluntary simplicity in 1984. Only four people showed up, so the course was canceled. In early 1992, she tried again. This time, 175 men and women crowded the auditorium. "Passion of the tense, exigent times," Cecile says to explain the difference three years made. All of a sudden, a lot of people find themselves in the same boat—they're raised, they're married, their quality of life is going down.

The enthusiasm people led her to expand the workshop into an ongoing simplicity circle. More workshops led to more circles, first in Seattle and then elsewhere in the country. Eventually, Cecile left her administrative job to become a full-time proselytizer for the simple life.

She offers to show me some people who've adopted the credo. "You'll find the middle-aged slacker at the Honey Bear Bakery," she says. The sales me to a snug, snug bakery-cum-coffee shop in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Its small parking lot and adjacent streets are packed with aging Subarus and Ford Explorers.

It is 11:15 A.M., too early for lunch, but the place is jammed. There are twelve women, almost all single and conversationally coupled, and eleven men, all but one alone. Most are reading; three are on laptops.

Jim Buchanan is one of the solitary typists. Frazled by cynicism, he is working on the bills on his table and the finance program on his screen again.

"I own my own business," says Buchanan, a neatly dressed thirty-nine-year-old with stylishly ironed, graying hair. He is also an sole employee—the receptionist, treasurer, and chief engineer of an audio-recording studio. The Honey Bear and its buzz provide him with the human surroundings he misses within his office's walls. "I use the Internet. I do a lot of work on E-mail. But that isolates you. I like the noise here."

Sometimes it's a bit much. "About four years ago, I came in here at ten in the morning, and it was full. And in I was standing there with my coffee, looking around the room, I muttered under my breath, 'Don't say to you people have jobs! And this guy heard me and shot back, 'Don't you?'"

Now he knows the answer. The "skillless shill," as he calls the early crowd includes "the people who had jobs but don't anymore and get a business card and call themselves consultants. They come here."

He symbolizes the room. Jobs, over in the corner, he comes in a lot. He writes various accounting software on his own. He has a contract with the state. They showed out as a micro-consultant at the University of Washington, but he left.

Why? Buchanan can't remember exactly. "Either it was money issues... or a cubicle."

Or both.

INFLUENCE IN THE LESSON of the work ethic was the idea of control—that we create our own fate, that we are solely responsible for our destiny. If, *à la* Ayn Rand, returns an appeal, it is in the message that, inevitably, we will find our fortune if we search hard enough. But Americans no longer believe in that fervently. Many of those who did believe have had their dreams dashed by the onslaught of statistics, with names and faces attached, that have crested through Americans' business these past few years.

At first, we dismissed it as the curse of the blue-collar class. When the five hundred largest U.S. manufacturing companies slashed payrolls by a 7 million workers between 1980 and 1993, white-collar America sighed with relief. When the slashes came for the members of the "new economy"—when IBM began laying off 171,000 people be-

tween 1986 and 1994—the middle class worried a bit but blamed Big Blue's complacency and the recession that had shattered it. But when the recession ended, the assault continued. A week before Christmas, Matsui (a toy retailer) announced the elimination of one thousand jobs, despite record profits, a month later, on the same day, a reported 1 percent increase in fourth-quarter profits. American Home Products Corporation said it would cut off four thousand workers. It was clear the crash had come for everyone.

The villain is called downsizing, and it is demolishing the white-collar world. For the first time since the Depression, middle-aged, middle-class, college-educated men are suffering a decline in their standard of living and their prospects for employment. During the last recession, for the first time in history, says Harvard economist James Mott, the percentage of unemployed white-collar workers grew. What's more, most men aged thirty-five to fifty-four are so pushed from their jobs are increasingly unable to find full-time employment. The ranks of those classified as "permanently unemployed" rather than "temporarily unemployed" grew by 10 percent between the 1981 recession and the slump a decade later. Indeed, Mottoff laments the 1990s "the era of middle-aged male permanent-layoff unemployment."

The financial—no to mention emotional—impact on the weakest, and presumably most secure, part of this cohort has been crushing. Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Frank Levy says that men aged forty-five to fifty-four with four years of college, middle managers who were "earning their age," saw their median earnings drop to \$41,468 in 1994 from \$46,469 just three years earlier. "This group has taken a pounding," Levy says.

Soon, they will be so dead, if the gears of the new economy are right. "I think there are a lot of people who will never find a job again," Michael Hammer, coauthor of the best-seller *Reengineering the Corporation*, said recently. "If you can't design or sell a product, if you can't do and work, I'd get real nervous."

Middle-aged slacking is not a choice. It's a necessity. "Twenty years, we're all going to have to cut back anyway," says Cecile Andros, dragging. "Are we going to be able to think of creative ways to live?"

AT 9:45 ON A FRIDAY evening, I go with Cecile to the Phinney neighborhood Center, a massive brick schoolhouse in northwest Seattle, near from the Honey Bear Bakery. Thirty-three men and women assembled in the basement auditorium for Cecile's latest voluntary simplicity workshop. Their first task is exploring life played at it ten feet, by nervously but soon with the unfettered confidence of a pianist under fire, they introduce themselves to one another.

"Five months ago, I left my company," says a weary, heavy-set man in his early thirties. "Sixty hours a week there in normal noise. Charging forward, going customers

services they didn't even want. And I survived four down stairs to last."

"Go through one now," says the woman next to him, of similar age, who's kept on her white apron to ward off the chill. The husband nods gently.

A hush, another man rises and introduces himself as a designer and a builder. His eyes are narrow and his skin is pale. "I work all the time," he tells the woman next to him. "I've been trying to cut back, save some money, so I can no longer my time."

"I was in seasonal work for twenty-five years," his neighbor responds. She doesn't give details, but somehow that career ended abruptly. "For the last three, I've been driving your back and forth to the airport. It's heavy pressure. I don't like it. I've paid off my credit cards. Now I want to do what I want to do."

"I just put in a proposal to cut my work back to thirty-two hours a week and take a 10 percent pay cut," says a fifty-year-old woman. "It's been accepted. It's to happy."

Corporate downsizing and its requirements—longer hours for less pay, a work environment with no security and little future—have brought us to a crossroads. The social contract between employees and their bosses has been broken. Without unions to fight for them and with the political and social environment turned unpropitiously Darwinian, workers—especially managers and professionals with a bit of a nest egg and a sense of emotional and intellectual security—are starting to withhold the one bargaining chip they have left: their time.

Dave Hummel and Jacques Blais know that well. They dropped out before the economy dropped them. "Before, in the seventies, you could still maybe get a job in a factory just a new car. Property values were skyrocketing everywhere. You could still count on doing better than your folks did," Dave says. "That's all changed. We're going through a dramatic change in the business world, and that's affecting the worker. So some of us are saying, maybe there's a better way."

So motivated is he of that "better way" that Dave has decided to become a proselytizer, writing and perhaps speaking on behalf of the downshifted life. Like new comers to any cause, he wants to surround himself with true believers, whose presence will support his own decision to drop out. And, maybe, reassure himself that he's not a quack but the advance guard of the twenty-first world. "I'm thinking this part of my work—and I separate that in my mind from a job—is promoting the concept of simplicity," Dave says. "I've come to believe as it as a philosophy and not merely an economic thing."

He remains defiant, though. "I'm not a career but a movement. 'I'm not doing it to earn my living.' Dave wants me to know, before he and Jacques take their 1988 Saturn (bought used) over to their simplicity-circle meeting. "I'll do make some extra money first, but that's not the goal."

No, the goal for him and his anarchist group is to show the nation that living simply is the best savings in

1984
Paul Theroux returns from the U.S. to Europe. He explains "Why we're in the middle of a crisis," "I wanted I had spent more time in the office."



1985
Philip Morris sells *Redskins* magazine and returns to America. The former reporter designs magazines for *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. He also writes for the *Wall Street Journal*.

1986
Peter Dinklage goes to manager of *Playboy*'s *SPN* series. Magazine *Paul* of age forty-two.



1988
Donner becomes publisher of *TIME*.

1989
The first issue of *TIME* is published. *TIME* is now published by *TIME*.



1990
The first issue of *TIME* is published. *TIME* is now published by *TIME*.



1991
Donner becomes publisher of *TIME*.



And Now the End Is Near...

Sinatra's Last Audition

By Jonathan Schwartz

WHO WILL MAKE the decision? I ask Hank Cantone, the man who has guided Frank Sinatra on and off stages from Dallas to Munich since 1965. "Frank," he replies, Cantone, a sweet heart of a guy with melancholy eyes, is

ac the fellow you'd expect to find in this job. My father, if he were alive, would figure Hank to be a "ruffian." And so would you. He is the human being closest to Sinatra in front of thousands of people, witless talker in hand, always dangling just above the flames of hot-moment change of plea.

Tonight, a Sunday in late February, Sinatra is to perform at a "gala" at the end of a Palm Desert golf tournament bearing his name. His last acting, in Japan, in December, was a casualty of unreasonable ferry missed musical restrictions, and the by-now-familiar loss of memory lyrics flew away out the Sinatra window, even as they crowded before him on twenty-first-century Japanese televisions that inched ahead with his own breathing. The plane ride home after the apparently as melius gig had been voracious and chaotic. The ball game that had stretched from 1949 through all the extra innings of the late eighties and early nineties was, it seemed, at long last done.

There remained on the schedule that one event, an evening that would require the roadblocker only to travel the short distance between home and stage, deliver four completely familiar songs and depart. Whether the greatest inter-

pretive musician who ever lived would create music publicly again would be a question possibly answered by the successful failure of his Palm Desert performance.

"He'll know," Hank Cantone says.

"What's he going to sing?" I ask, applying a Sinatra curve similar to my shot, a most coveted credential that displays a photo of Sinatra at a sport coat, wearing a Name Diner cap and holding a model railroad car from (one assumes) his own elaborate collection.

"Junior made up the list," Hank says. "It's sold."

Junior is Frank Sinatra Jr., his father's conductor. He's been at it since 1960 and has grown confident and potent in the job. Junior has come to resemble his father by deftly removing himself from any chance of cordial encounter.

His face, ever expressionless, goes from cool to cold. He is buried away behind a profound defense. Suspicious about—somewhere as there he must be alert for yet more wounding influences. If he could weep for weeks, he would finish unmolested. His loneliness is palpable.

Willie Nelson, Sinatra's opening act, must through his half-hour set during the rehearsal time of close to six. His rock 'n' roll-country swing cannot easily absorb the anticipation of the headlines, even in rehearsal, Nelson is irrelevant.

Frank Sinatra, as has been his custom for many years, will absent himself from the afternoon run-through. His peacemaker Bill Miller, now a white-haired eighty-something exactly Sinatra's age, will "go to the house to warm up the old man," Hank repeats.

Junior makes it for his father, leading the twenty-piece band through the legendary arrangements, usually singing 75 percent of the tune—straightforward, musical, untheatrical, meant only to prepare the band for how it will be when the real thing comes along. He's foretold with the band, fluent in its language, dignified.

The ballroom itself, immense beyond reason or taste, is being reached by at least seventy youngish men and women. The tables, 110 of them, sitting four to twelve, are set and groomed. The lighting and sound stand at the back of the room is quietly manned by nimble technicians in their late twenties who have learned to assemble and disassemble hundreds of feet of wiring during, among other occupations, hurricanes in Asian nations. They

have traveled the world with rock 'n' rollers since their teens. They have observed knifings, copulations, shootings, beatings, and mass panic. That hole gig at Marriott's Desert Springs Resort & Spa for an octogenarian singer is easy for this stability group.

And so it has come to this: Sinatra, on the road for sixty years, has singing voice the second-most recorded sound created by a single human being (Duke Crosby's is first); his sections in record stores all over the world sell more pop music and deserve, in 1995, than any other recording artist's, his name on best-selling charts in most countries even today; his anthems, "My Way" and "New York, New York," as both national and spiritual use it; baseball stadiums and other monumental gathering places—the man is, on a late Sunday afternoon, preparing for one last set down the road. East on Frank Sinatra Drive, right on Bob Hope Drive, and left on Country Club Drive three or four miles to Marriott's Desert Springs Resort & Spa it is 75 degrees at 5:00 PM. The Santa Rosa Mountains in the distance are lovely snow-capped. It has been an almost hot, pulpy-white-cloud desert day.

Winner

THE HEAD OF THE STRIKE SOCIETY of America, a fan club that periodically publishes news of his comings and goings, is a twenty-nine-year-old man from Larchmont, New York, who has traveled extensively at his own expense to Sinatra concerts anywhere and always. His name is Charles Pagnone, known as C. J., and he is a well-known Sinatra groupie, accepted as part of the gang. Sinatra himself allows C. J. access to everything—he can sit in the wings on a folding chair during a performance if he wants to. C. J. is in possession of a Sinatra starry credential that hangs around his neck like a performer's press pass. It is C. J. who imports the news to me that Sinatra wishes to be placed when Willie Nelson is half finished with his performance.

Knowing that Sinatra is not present, I am free to wander the ballroom.

It is a massed crowd, swamped and generally oblivious to the real possibility that they close will have witness to the first moments of Sinatra's music. There has been, after all, a golf tournament, a charity event, a gaudy opportunity for personal exhibition. I have heard that there are famous names from the world of golf here, but I am unable to spot them, not knowing who in the world they could possibly be. I wonder to a spot thirty feet or so from a crowded off space that will serve as Sinatra's dressing room. I have already scolded a look finding an immaculate strap, corset and flowers and earrings and bangles and bows of fur and



The electrifying anticipation of imminent high art is missing on this night. High art I don't expect. I am hoping only for artistic survival.

a jar of chocolates, a cheerful if temporary elegance

Only a moment or so after I assume my waiting post, I can see movement in the dressing room. A flash of white hair suggests Sinatra's presence. I move a few feet to my left to discover, through a slight parting of the curtains, that the singer is indeed present. That someone, possibly through the bushes, Frank Sinatra has been secured.

He has arrived on the scene of Willie Nelson's noisy dinner of pop names. Frenzied (finally) Nelson exits, the members of his band gathering their paraphernalia, electrical cords trailing behind them. The real deal, the guys from Los Angeles down here in the desert to play that gig, begin to take their places on the bandstand.

The din of expectation that for years has preceded Sinatra's appearances onstage, a tense buzz with the suggestion of both fear and adoration and the almost electrifying anticipation of imminent high art, is missing on this night. What's going on is the social hum of the truly affluent: desert chatter, business talk, the instrumentation of recreation.

I crouch down in the back, right in front of the lightning and sound men. High art I don't expect. I am hoping only for artistic survival.

Without any fuss at all, he stands before us.

There is enthusiasm. The crowd knows it. It could be David Letterman, Tony Danza, Rex Wilson. Perhaps there's more affection. After all, Sinatra is a desert guy with a charming face, and he's made records and appeared on TV and stuff. Frank Sinatra. Nancy with the Laughing Face. That's Life. My Way. Oh, boy.

Up goes Nelson Riddle's arrangement of "I've Got the World on a String." Sinatra's voice is clear, tough, on the money. The lyrics' last word, *love*, is held to the end, with erratic and music. The pickup band from L.A. is right, solid. "You better be sure," he sings, his body already eye-copied, and automatically the on the last, longingly held song. Dinah Shore and dozens of other singers have made a living in this territory.

"Fly Me to the Moon" is automatic. Sinatra swings to his very center, in absolute control.

"Where or When" is performed by a forty-five-year-old man. It is everything Sinatra wishes to convey. It is a lullaby with tempo that gathers rhythmic momentum and explodes at its conclusion. Its last long line, the "where or when," is sustained to the last drop of the high F flat, not repeated for lack of breath.

He decides to sing an unplanned fifth song.

"Here's one that everybody knows," Sinatra says, over

the intro to "My Kind of Town," which rapidly becomes the equal of "Where or When."

The applause is no longer for Letterman or Wilson. When it dies down a bit, Sinatra says, "You mean it's time to go home?"

There is a moment of conference between father and son, not really a conference, just Janice, so quietly as possible, addresses his father from the podium.

Then, Bill Miller, in Coors Blue style, slides into "That Is Yet to Come." Sinatra raises his eyebrows, but Janice suggests the band turn, covering for the singer's belated start. The result is seamless: the singing, high art.

Goat

SINATRA IS GONE, and I'm alone here. I catch up with him in a side lobby. He is signing autographs. He looks a bit hurried.

His wife, who has been sitting in the center of the ballroom with, among others, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hope, catches up to her husband almost as I do. She takes his hand and guides him to a limousine parked outside a glass door.

"When are you going to learn how to swing?" she asks him by way of water compliments.

He doesn't reply, moving forward, the crowd edging. He stands by the open car door as one or two others, including the actor Robert Wagner, slip in before him.

A little man in a rumble green jacket is there to place his hand on top of the head of every passenger, saving each from any possibility of a bump.

Unaccountably, Sinatra still stands, his right hand resting on the roof of the absurdly enormous Lincoln.

He begins to step the roof from him, from him. He is not angry. He is impatient.

And then he's in the car, having avoided the head-helping hand.

Really goes.

Leaving the ringing of the music. Leaving the impact of his intention: the honest consequence of feelings through the art of automatic singing.

If it were up to me, based on this night, I'd book him around the world.

But hold a

If it were truly up to me, I believe I would quietly close the door and put a note in the hall: I would write: Goodnight, Frank.

And then, perhaps in smaller letters: Goodbye. ■



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MORE THAN A FEELING
IT'S A FORCE OF NATURE

GRAVITY

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COLOGNE FOR MEN

GRAVITY

GRAVITY



At four, he was a prodigy, trading forehands with Jimmy Connors. By twenty-one, he was merely a class clown. So Andre Agassi started over—got a haircut, studied hard, and found a sweetheart.

Who says school sucks?

Educating Andre

By Martha Sherrill

IT WAS A WET, OVERCAST morning in Las Vegas when the journey to Brooke Shields began. The private jet was headed with desert rain. As Andre Agassi looked out the small porthole, he raised his middle finger, then chuckled a little sweetly. A photographer was on the tarmac, taking pictures for *Sports Illustrated*. The day before, the guy had said something in passing that kind of pissed Agassi off. He made mention of the old days, Agassi's more troubled times, of his mispent youth.

"I work ten times harder than him," Agassi said softly, shaking his shaved head, "and he has the nerve to make a crack about something I did as a kid."

He stretched out on the cool gray leather bucket seats. He was ruminating, philosophizing. His handsome built settled into one seat. His bony legs, unformed and not particularly remarkable, were resting in another. He wore a black nylon warm-up. His white-and-gray sneakers were crazy-ugly. On TV, sometimes, he can look a little evil. But now with his tanned skin and quizzical expression, he seemed meekish and benign. Even his sharp goatee and two silver hoop earrings—the size of thick wedding rings—



Agassi was initiated into the game as if it were something everybody had to learn, like holding a fork.

weren't leading an air of danger to his overall mood. And he said the most unusual things.

His youth had not been wasted, he said. He had no regrets. He didn't believe in regrets. He said: "You who you are today?" So if he did have regrets, he'd be happy about them. Unless he didn't like who he was today or what had become of him. But he does. He does like who he is today, very much.

He is "the biggest name out on the planet," according to a newspaper in the Bay Area, where he's just won another tournament. He is also a twenty-five-year-old with his own jet and pilot. He smells like jet, he says. It smells like energy.

He competes every other week, with exhibition matches in between. Usually if he wins, and he's been mostly winning lately—starting from a ranking below twenty to number two in the last year—he willfully removes his baggy Nike T-shirt, balls a zip, throws it to the air, and barely moves around to see which screaming teenage girl or middle-aged man catches it. Without too much stopping, except to glance at his Swiss Army watch, he accepts another shout trophy, smiles simply, turns several powdered towels for the press, and then, almost unthinkingly, showers and changes and goes back into the local arena, leaving to the day and night what he's like to guests, to the masses, when he'll arrive at his door—the residue of his great big love, Brooke Shields.

Everything lies here in the heat, it seems. When he's away from tennis, his eyes turn sweet and misty. Talking about Shields, he is so open and so unguessed, you have to swoon along with him, hang on for a jet ride through the Land of Eternestness or down to his spiritual depth. "It's on a row level," he says. "That's the most special."

We walked slowly down the runway, amid a long, crispy landscape, and a pyromaniac came into view then palm trees, then a sphinx, the Luxor hotel. We lifted off, rose above the casino and Agassi's hometown, and it seemed like an exodus of sorts, from a phony Babylon Egypt to New York City, a place that might be just as much so. As soon as the jet reached cruising altitude, Agassi got himself a cup of coffee. He took some milk in a three sugars, and a packet of Equal.

For years, Agassi did not seem determined to waste his talents. He was famous for eating crispy food for not practicing his game, for getting fat. There were stories about "ankled" men, how he lost differentially and failed injuries. He turned pro as a teen and seemed embarrassed and ambivalent by twenty-five. On a long attack and injured, he was dropped by his longtime coach. Dumped as a failure.

"Maybe I was rewarded too quickly," he said. "I came at a time when tennis needed somebody—when tennis was looking for another American. I had too much negativity because I really accomplished great things. For me to be doing Nike commercials and Canon commercials and never win-

ning a Grand Slam tournament, that left me with a bad rap—all image, no substance."

True enough, his clothes got him the attention that his tennis didn't anymore. He wore baggy shorts and black socks and looked like a mull rat. He wasn't grown-up enough to wear what at Wimbledon. And when was with the stringy hair? At a time when American tennis was in a terrific slump, people said he was good for tennis, but somehow, he was bad for tennis, too.

AS A TEENAGER, Andre Agassi was initiated into the game as if it were something everybody had to learn, like holding a fork. His dad, Ernestine "Mike" Agassi, was such a formalistic tennis instructor that he had developed an entire routine for learning the game. Day after day, there were as many as eight ball machines on the court at the old Tropicana hotel, shooting out ball after ball after ball at the Agassi kids—Rita, Philip, Tami, and Andre.

"We loved the rain," says Philip Agassi. "It meant one day when we didn't have to play."

Mike Agassi is American but was born and raised in Iran. He came to the United States in 1955, he didn't know any English, but he knew how to lose. He had been on Iran's Olympic team, and in Chicago, he was a Golden Gloves champion. He was supposed to turn professional one night at the old Madison Square Garden in 1955, but when the boxer he was scheduled to fight backed out, Mike was matched up with an experienced opponent, a guy with forty or fifty fights behind him. It was a long shot, but if Mike fought him, he was told, he'd have a much greater shot at the championship.

But instead of going into the ring, Mike Agassi crawled out a window. "He went right into the locker room," says Philip. "And punched out the window to the street and left. He took a train back to Chicago, and I think that night he bought a tennis racket."

He punched? "No, he didn't punch," says Philip. "He just didn't want to lose anymore."

It seems he has passion, and Mike Agassi threw himself at the sport, body and soul. With his wife, Betty, he headed west, to the direction of California. He hated the cold and wanted to find a place where tennis was played year-round. When he couldn't find work in California, he backtracked to Las Vegas. Betty found a job at the Nevada State Employment Agency, where she would work for their ty years. Mike drifted from one part-time job to the next, working at customs at night as a waiter or a showboat captain. During the day, he taught tennis.

The two-older kids were "junta guys," says Philip. Mike bought ball machines and took them apart, regressed them to

hold three hundred to four hundred balls, and holed them up along one end of the court at the Tropicana. And they blasted out balls and, at the end of the day, they'd be on thousands on the court. But that was okay because Mike had gotten huge blowers—those giant fans used to dry baseball fields after rain—to blow all the balls to one side, then he got out his invention that the Agassi brand came to call "the pulber," an eight-foot long blower that let out winds that pushed the balls into one corner. Then Mike brought out the "scooper," a machine used for picking up hundreds of balls at one time.

Andre won the baby and first played tennis for his father at age two and a half, with a racket that Mike had taped to his hand. Before that, a tennis ball had been dangled over Andre's crib to focus his eyes, and he was given a balloon to hit around—hand-eye coordination being everything. Later, he played against his father's students and against the sons who blew through town. At first, Andre played Jimmy Connors. At five, his family moved into a better house, where Mike had built his own tennis court. By six, having spent most days of his life looking over a net, Andre had the Agassi move down. Hit the ball early, and he is hard.

"Dad would not let me play," says Andre. "I never considered doing anything else. As a kid, all you know is what you see around you, and tennis was all I saw. Why would I want to do anything else?"

Andre started playing in tournaments at seven—early even for tennis—and won his first nine matches. Every other weekend, the family took to the highway to their station wagon and drove to Southern California ten hours each way, staying all together in one room of a Motel 6, so the kids could play in junior tournaments, where, eventually, Andre first encountered Pete Sampras and Michael Chang and Jim Courier.

When Andre was sent to live at the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy in Florida after eighth grade, he was shocked to learn how he had to feel. At the famous tennis facility, he was given the choice to challenge other great players his age—and was soon courted among a group of promising Bollettieri protégés that included Aaron Krichstorn and Jimmy Arias—but Agassi was homebody. During the day, he was dressing in black, indulging in black moods and tantrums, smashing his racket against a wall when he lost.

"I hated it," says Andre, "hated growing up in Florida, three thousand miles away from home. But the only way I could get out of that academy was to succeed. So that became my impetus to do well so that I could escape."

HIS BROTHER, Philip, is a little shorter and darker than Andre and has considerably less hair. He was bald, pretty much, by his late twenties—like a number of his uncles and his grandfather, he says. Now, at thirty-two, Philip wears a trustee-curly, loose, natural-looking and soft-but-most-maintainable first maintenance hair in the hands without it, as the TV camera panned to him during all of Andre's tournaments.

After Andre turned pro at sixteen, Philip traveled

everywhere with his brother, sleeping on the floor of Andre's motel room. He booked the hotels and flights, planned meals, rented cars and some called the racket stringer, and tended to the endless minutiae of traveling around the world half of the year. "You heard that Andre would be childhood," says Philip. "I did, too."

And though Andre thought tennis pro would be his escape, he still didn't feel any better. There was lots of crying out to do, mostly with his hair. First he shaved his head, then grew a mullet, then dyed the mullet's blond.



Menace, anyone?

The old, thrice Agassi versus the new, killer image. As of so many other times in his life, when he seemed out of control, he did something to his hair.

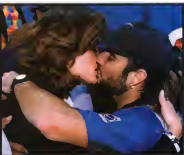
At a match in Florida, he turned up wearing jeans, leopards, and eyeliner. And he'd passed his sons.

He had, himself, went in disguise. Underneath, of course, Andre was still Andre—competitive and anal, a perfectionist—plus, outside, he was loose. He told himself that if he looked a certain way, looked cool, he would be cool inside, too. It was a way he could take the pressure off himself. "I was looking for a break," says Andre about turning pro, "but there wasn't a break. I might have gotten away from the discipline of the academy, but then came the criticism and judgments, getting that nickname the bad boy of tennis."

At the end of his first year, he was ranked twenty-one. At the end of his second, he was twenty-five. In 1988, his third year on the tour, he became number three. And even at this time, he began wondering what it was all leading to—the matches, the traveling, the endless need to

was. Eventually, Andre found God and joined Meadows Fellowship Church in West Las Vegas. On the tour, he got together with Michael Chang to study the Bible. He also talked about religion with reporters. Nowadays, he's generally pretty quiet. He doesn't "feel the need," he says, "to pick up God's slack to much anymore."

"Faith is an important thing. I guess what makes me feel good about all this madness is the sense of purpose I have in my life growing understanding of God's plan for me." By 1995, Mike Agassi's plan for Andre was being realized. His ranking stabilized in the top seven in the end of the year, he was fourth, and Agassi was earning more than a million a year in prize money alone. But he was restless with tennis. The years of carrying a tennis bag around the world, with an entourage of coaches, agents, and stylists had become an endless grind. He told Phillip to go home, permanently. "He'd grown up, become a man," says Phillip.



His Mike Brooke: "On top of being in love with her, I like her."

"and I was still there, his old chaperone. Finally I'm married he didn't make the decision either. I wish I had a little more warning—so it didn't go on so long that Andre had to say something to me."

When he wasn't playing his best, he didn't feel he deserved to win. "I was a performance thing," says Agassi. When he was finally comfortable playing Wimbledon after skipping it for three years, he did well—lost in the quarterfinals in 1994 and won in 1995. And that same year, his good friend Boris Becker even called him a Zim master. But those successes didn't mean much to him.

"I think more than anything, it was childhood stuff," he says now. "I didn't want to play because I felt I had compromised so much of my life to get where I was. I was playing for the wrong reason, and then all of a sudden, I was forced to understand that and start playing for the right reasons or not at all."

TWENTY YEARS AGO, Andre and down with Agassi and Nick Bollettieri on one point, the two went on an entire year without talking—but she did come as a surprise to everybody. It was in 1993, when Agassi started having problems with tendinitis in his right wrist and was losing more and more matches. He got far on McNaggett and candy and he kept a list. When he'd gone pro, he'd swayed up but was now up to six, and Sports Illustrated reported that his thighs were rubbing together.

"He used to be a symbol for me of all the kids who didn't ever have to win anymore," says opponent and frequent contributor Mike Luzzi. "Sports used to be taken plus an act Andre was all act. He was like a rockstar sport celebrity I used to talk to. I'd say to God, at least we need to win."

The news that Bollettieri was leaving Agassi came to the tennis star fourthhand. Bollettieri finally admitted in a letter to Agassi that, yes, he was leaving to spend more time with his family. The truth came out a little later. He'd dumped Agassi for Boris Becker.

"He's a selfish person," says Agassi of his old coach. "He thought that I wasn't going to do well anymore, but he didn't have the guts to tell me like I was."

At tournaments now, the two of them run in to each other. Agassi says he sees Bollettieri holding court in the lobby of hotels or surrounded by a group of cronies at restaurants. "I look in his eyes," Agassi says, "and can see that he's not used to deal with all the things I struggle with about him. So it's just pain."

But when God closes one door, as Andre might say, another door magically opens open. Two things happened. He started psychotherapy and Brooke Shields entered the picture. They were set up by Lyndie Bonner, the wife of pop soap prince Kenny G.

"She always had a feeling there was a kinship between us," says Shields. "I can't say I was paid, but I didn't put a lot of stock in it."

Shields was making a movie in Africa, and after receiving a letter from Agassi, she found him back home, they were sending him back to back. Soon, they were sending him back to back. Soon, they were sending him back to back.

They had much in common, even talked the same bubbly therapy-speak. It wasn't unique, in any case. Her grandfather may have been Frank Shields, a U.S. Open finalist in 1930, but Brooke says she never enjoyed the game. "I've avoided tennis any whole life because of my own stigma," she says. "When I was a kid, there was a lot of pressure to play and I never would. But my sisters all did. I was the enormous industry star, and I just didn't fit in."

After she got back from Africa, they talked on the phone every day for six weeks before meeting in December 1993. Shields says she had already fallen in love with Andre by that time but was insecure, sure it wouldn't work. It wasn't their age difference—she's five years older—but mostly what she calls "my bad music record."

"Even if she wasn't an actress," Agassi says, "it would still be very important for me to have Brooke in my life."

"It all looked good on paper," she says. "Then, he was smart and nice and called when he said he'd call. He even remembered things I'd told him. All these things—but I was so afraid."

A month after his own wrist surgery for tendinitis, Agassi stood by Shields when she went through something similar—having all her toes broken and realigned in January 1994 to reverse damage caused by flexing. "He came and took me to the hospital," she says, "and was the first face I saw coming out. I think that was the beginning of a sense of commitment."

"We've both gone through a lot of the same things," says Agassi. "We were both children young. We both went through a strange lifestyle young, and we both got bad, and when we were young, so we have a similar history together. And I think both of us haven't manifested our abilities. But that's changing."

In order to maximize his own abilities, Agassi formalized a business arrangement with his friend Perry Rogers around the same time. The two have been best friends since they were kids, and Agassi hired Rogers to set up new offices for Agassi Enterprises and help managerial his contracts. At twenty-two, he is, superficially at least, Agassi's opposite. He dresses in Ralph Lauren khakis and plaid shirts and pony loafers, and comes off more like a Mormon missionary than a sports impresario. He and Agassi are amazingly close and spend more time talking about "relationships and leadership" and "what you owe God" than money deals, he says. But eighteen months after starting, Rogers pulled off one of the biggest endorsement packages in sports—a contract with Nike that will bring Agassi between \$100 million and \$200 million during the next ten years.

"We have two rules," says Rogers during the plane ride to New York. "We only touch each other's back. I watch his. He watches mine. That way nobody has to keep watching his own. And if our friendship ever suffers, even then I watch" he says, holding two fingers just half an inch apart, "then I quit."

HIS WATER was heading just an inch and a half of purple-pink near when Agassi began competing early in 1994. He played well, winning his first tournament in Scotland in late February, but it seemed to him there was something missing. His company was coming together. His personal life was finally satisfying—there'd been a couple of serious girlfriends before but nobody like Shields. He'd hired weight trainer Greg Rippe and was finally caring deeply. He had bought four lots in a gated community in west Las Vegas and was building a house for his parents, plus a gym and a tennis court for himself. But his game was still unsatisfying.



"It was so weird, too," says Agassi. "Because my stress was making the rest of my life possible. Perry and I were sitting in my living room one day and just decided I needed a coach."

He made a list of several guys and took professional player Brad Gilbert to lunch first—without telling him why Gilbert had written a book, *Winning*, and was known for being outspoken and having strong opinions about competition. He liked giving advice. The two spoke informally about Agassi's tennis, and Gilbert couldn't seem to help himself from coming up with new suggestions. By the next day they were on the court trying out Agassi.

"He had my game down up like you can't believe," says Agassi. "He knew what I did when I was eighteen, what I stopped doing when I was nineteen, what changed in 1990, when I was twenty. I mean, every year, he knew what happened and why my game never got better."

Gilbert is a dark-haired, smiling kind of guy who looks a little like Richard Gere, with deeply crinkled eyes and almond eyes. He is thirty-three and is at the end of his own professional career. Sitting in the Paramount hotel in San Jose, where he is coaching Agassi to another victory at the Byron Nelson, he wears jeans and a moss-green shirt. His feet are planted on the coffee table and his legs are two-handed water, when he is talking about Agassi.

"Nick told me that if you want out and played well," Gilbert says, "that would be enough. I'm more of a strategist."

Agassi wasn't using his head, Gilbert thought. He wasn't thinking through the whole game. He was muzzling his energy, too—he would go into a slump on the second set, then start having screaming wasters when things got bad. Even though he'd won Wimbledon and reached four Grand Slam finals, he was inconsistent and couldn't be counted on. None of the other players were afraid of him.

So Gilbert gave Agassi his new strategy, his methodology. He didn't hope to improve Agassi's best game—his serve. In strategy, he said, he was a coach, not a player. "I was Andie," he says—he was wanted to make Agassi's worst game better. He got him inside the baseline more, serving bigger and dishing out. He also wanted to shorten Agassi's passive hits, the legacy Zen; now he sometimes got into Gilbert says Agassi was like a boxer who "couldn't move in for that final knockout punch."

Agassi also went to Tony Robbins, the motivational speaker, for a little emotional help—like a slightly depressed businessman. He met with Robbins once, professionally and spent the day with him. "Tony is an incredible person," Agassi says, "and probably one of the most evolved people I've met, in terms of understanding the world and people and human nature."

But a learning curve is also sometimes a loving curve, and

ually Agassi lost the French Open badly and then Wimbledon and then the Volvo Championship in Washington, D.C., last July—his ninth consecutive tournament without a title. He wondered if the new plan was ever going to work. And as he did so many other times in his life, when he seemed out of control, he wanted to do something to his hair. "It was really last summer," Agassi says, "that I decided to cut my hair off."

The upswing came soon enough. He and Gilbert went to Toronto a couple of weeks later, and Agassi won the Canadian Open. Shallick watched in the stands. Agassi liked having her there. During his victory at the U.S. Open in September, he stayed with Shallick in her Manhattan townhouse. "And the weirdest thing is," he says, "I slept better the night before the finals than ever before."

A COMEBACK, ANOTHER FEAR for the game, seems to be appearing on the horizon, like a dark line way out at sea that becomes a swell that becomes a big perfect wave. You can smell it coming, too, smell it with the energy around Andre Agassi—and the money he is everybody's hope—and cash cow. In late February, at the Sydney Open, the new fan Jose Maria went pensive, looking down at his entrance. Disco music, which doesn't agree with him, blared. Spotlights swirled around the ceiling of the dome, searched the stands, then found him, hunted like a movie star at a premiere.

"In promoting this event, the minute we could say that Agassi was coming, it gave us a huge boost," says tournament director Barry McKay. But even though Agassi promised he'd come almost eight months before the event and was paid a guarantee—top players are paid between \$500,000 and \$750,000 just to play, which amounts in this case to five times the prize money for the first-year-McKay still couldn't find a sponsor for the 30-year-old tournament until the weekend before the matches started.

Americans can only if Americans are winning, and, in the last ten years, they mostly haven't been. The Australian Open, which mostly hasn't been. The Australian Open, but only because tennis is enormously popular in Europe. The golden age of tennis—when McEnroe and Connors and Borg and Cima Even were in their prime—was so long ago that the kids who started playing tennis then are growing a little old. The night of the finals of the Sydney Open, Agassi versus Chang, there was a handout for a "Tennis Cruise" which sounded comically like something meant to attract soccer fans—stuck in everybody's mind.

While Agassi's image—his maybe dangerous—brags teenagers and protests back to tennis, Pin Simpson's represents something else entirely. In truth, he might be lower and more low-key than Agassi on the court, but Simpson has quite a reputation as a mentor to classics and moderns. He wears all white. He modeled his game after David Eaves' and until the Australian Open earlier this year—when he added speed during a match against Courier—he displayed very little concern or personality on the court.

And while Agassi may be "the biggest tennis star on the planet," and is rewarded by the clothing and equipment companies for his enormous celebrity—he has deals now with Head, Conna, and Swiss Army as well as Nike—he isn't everybody's favorite tennis player on the planet. Many people still say that Simpson is better.

With the French Open and Wimbledon coming up, the entire world of tennis isn't really rooting for one player or over another—for Agassi or for Simpson—as much as it is hoping for a glorious duel between the two men, one that might last for years, one that might, in any case, last longer than Borg-McEnroe. And at twenty-three and twenty-five, Simpson and Agassi are a few years away from the end of their prime, which in tennis is said to be twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

"You gotta keep improving," Agassi says. "If you don't, the other guys improve and it's like you're the prove. Number one can't stay there or else you're like Becker or Mats Wilander, and you're there only a month. It's definitely something you have to have a plan for. You have to have a big plan, or else you're just winging it."

Sweet Pete and the Future King slugging it out for number one. Agassi won in Australia, Simpson took Indianapolis. Nike already has the rivalry commercials planned for the summer. Agassi is in one match and was Simpson posing in another. Both cars stop. The two players get out in the middle of the street, set up a tennis court, and start going at it.

"You need to have the right ingredients for a rivalry," says Agassi. "So many things have to come together for those moments in time. Calisto-Lakos, Dodger-Tanaka, Borg-McEnroe. Me and Pete have the ingredients, and we're starting to make it happen."

This is what keeps Agassi fired up these days. Just a couple of years ago, he was bored, ambivalent. Dumped by his coach. Left for dead by the tennis world. Now he can't stop thinking about the game. "It's so close to me," he says. "I can't go too long without thinking about it because I feel like I can improve just thinking about it. Oh, I'm getting better all right. I can see it happen."

IN THE VERY BACK of the limousine taking him from Burbank Airport in New Jersey into Manhattan, Agassi sits in a small car, a black one, with a black cover—and young, like a kid wanting a fake gun and a sword, an Andre Agassi Hell-sworder. He has wrapped his arms around the seat, his head resting on his hand, his head resting on his hand, his head resting on his hand. He has brought from his house in Las Vegas to give to Shallick.

"I never use it," he says, pointing the top of the small box. "And Brooke said if I brought it here, she'd make me finish bed."

For the last six months, Brooke has been marring in the Broadway revival of *Grease*. He's been a thirty or forty years by now. "I used to sit in the stands," he says, as if referring to a sporting event, "but now I'm backstage, sitting in a first-class and sometimes part reading, hanging out in her dressing room, waiting for her there. It's his fun to be on somebody else's schedule. I enjoy that. It's so refreshing to me. She's working, and I'm just there, just idling."

They have a public contact, but they're hardly Les Taylor and Richard Burton—morning drinks and showering advice. It's even hard to imagine their fighting. They talk endlessly about being vulnerable and open-minded and how they are walking the same path to emotional health. They read the same books, C.S. Lewis and Marianne Williamson. But they don't seem, as they might say in Cal-



The next three years are for his tennis, for him to do it right. And probably for a wedding. "Our future together," Brooke says, "is our dream."

forza, to be in touch with their rage. "It's never an accidental parody of words," Shields says of their disagreements. "He'll get quiet, so I'll say, 'Let's talk. I think I've said something to upset you. What did I say?' How did it affect you? What can I learn from it? Or he'll say, 'I feel I haven't responded to you at that area.'"

As the limousine approaches Manhattan and Shallick's townhouse on Forty-second Street, Agassi's mind is drifting. "It's been ten days since I saw her," he says. He's restless, peaceful. Scratching himself, he looks rigidly out the window. "Even if she wasn't an actress," he'd said earlier, "it would still be very important for me to have her in my life."

She's careful not to lean on him, she says, or he too needy. "It's the hub of the wheel. I see it, day in, day out, in every area of his life. And so when I came into the picture, I didn't want to be yet another spoke. I want to be, come my own wheel, with my own spokes. Hopefully

we're on the same vehicle—going in the same direction."

She'll be moving to California soon, hoping to "become the actress that I want to become," she says. Agassi says someday he might be willing to leave Las Vegas, maybe for Marin County. In any case, that's the off. The next three years are for his tennis, for him to do it right. And probably for a wedding. "Our future together," she says, "is our dream."

The limousine floats to the curb within two minutes of his estimated time of arrival and takes to a stop that's so slow it could almost make you queasy. Agassi has the door open while it's still rolling and scowls out. Back by the trunk, he looks himself down with his various duffel bags and notes and tennis bags, looking like an underdog on a soccer break. He disappears into the townhouse for a few moments, then reappears, knocking on the window and pointing. "The bread machine!" He bends down and looks it up, smiling like he's home. ■

Havana at Midnight

For the *jineteras*, the once-nice girls who haunt the discos in Castro's decaying capital, this is the way the revolution ends: with a bang, a whimper, and six bars of soap from a Mexican businessman

By Lynn Darling

IT IS MIDNIGHT AT the Florid Rooms, and the *Palacio de la Salsa* is finally in full swing, its entrance besieged by young women begging for admission to the disco's dark interior.

They spill into the lobby, litigad girls with golden neckties, curly manes with spexy aires and long legs, and big-breasted, big-eyed black girls, their heads thrown back as if a harsh hand held them at the napes of their necks. The women wear neon orange, biking pants and black spitzie boots and ruffled off-the-shoulder shirts. They wear Daup Mac-style checked shirts and tight spandex pants belted with catkins all the way up the sides, from ankle to waist. They wear slurred 1950s-style conga dresses and black-and-white-striped anything. Their hair is pulled back or swept up or cascading over one eye or arpegging in frizzy loose waves and dyed all manner of blond. To walk through the smoke-lit darkness of the disco is to inhabit several innumerable decades of hand-me-down Hollywood: Veronica Lake and Marilyn Monroe, Betty Grable and Whitney Houston. But there are no Madonna's; her starring power trip has no place in this garden of pliant goddesses.

The men, the women, wait to meet with inside the *Palacio de la Salsa*.



Waiting for dollars: (clockwise from top) a woman prepares to eat, a man at the club, and The Palace in Salsa with guests.



In the room are older and pale and fat, and they walk with their shoulders hunched and the backs of their hands forward, Nuevo Maastricht style. They are little men, the kind who get pushed around once for every shove they get to give. They come from Mexico and Spain and Italy, Canada and Germany and through the women hate the Mexicans for their drunkenness and obscenity and laugh at the Canadians for their inhibitions, they tell you that they are all just men. Many are here on business, investors in Castro's dollar deal.

Others are tourists who have heard Cuba advertised as the latest stop on the international sex tour. The Moslems come by the plinked-out row, much as Japanese men go to Bangkok, but without, so far, the same AIDS-soaked sense of danger.

In Cuba, these second—the ones who go with the tourists to their rooms in the newly renovated hotels—are called *jequestros*. The word comes from the Spanish for 'jockey' and in its masculine form applies to all the small-time hustlers trying to cling to the neck of the tourist trade on which Fidel Castro has placed all of Cuba's bets. But it is the feminine form that attracts attention.

The women in the disco are not typical whores, if such a thing exists outside the minds of men. Cuba is not Thailand, where teenage peasants sell their twelve-year-old daughters to the Bangkok brothels. It is not New York, where underclass adults ply their trade under the watchful eyes of the men who manage them. Not yet.

These guys are out there, of course. You can find them along the Milpitas, the second, after name the twelve-year-olds, the drug addicts, the girls with blackened eyes and frightened faces, the women we have always with us. But prostitution in Cuba is not something of an amateur affair. Many of the pimps are middle-class women—former teachers, former translators, women with university education who work the weekends and go back to their middle-class neighborhoods in the morning. They are not prostitutes, they say, because they would not be doing this if the money turned at their day jobs could buy anything.

Not all of the men make such distinctions. Lastly, the distance between the two points of view has led to some misunderstandings. A few years ago, the tourists say, the tourists didn't know how desperate the situation was. The transaction between a man and a woman could be understood, made as much as if the money were a gracious, charitable afterthought to a woman's request. But now, the tourists come with notions full of underwear and soap, and they think that's enough. At the beach resorts the tourists say to the girls, "How much are you seeking? Because I can only give you a couple of bucks," and the women are taking the men's bills in their hands right there on the beach, making the illusion of romance somewhat harder to maintain.

WHEN I SAID I was going to Cuba to write about prostitution, there was always the same question: Why Cuba?

The easy answer was the cruel irony, the way in which the revolution had come full circle, the corruption of Castro's Cuba, the trampled dignity, the menacing mirror embodied now in the women who crowd the discotheques and the men who make use of them.

But there was more. Cuba is a country at the end of us.

haps, and whatever you might think of the revolution that brought it there, even if its failure does not break your heart, there is still the distress of its promise to contend with. It shall still dawn to the people who must walk among them.

This is the deal in Cuba today. The state pays the people in pesos. The stores accept only US dollars. This is official policy, and the official policy means that a doctor earns the equivalent of about three dollars a month and a professor earns fifty dollars in an entire year.

It is not for the most part, a matter of caring or not caring. The mean card assumes that, officially, no one will return. But the ration card does not provide milk or eggs or the pasta you need to visit a friend, the medicine the state provided doctor prescribes, the shampoo you need to wash your hair. The ration card does not stop the weekly blackouts or the water shortages or replace the ration that have worn out and cannot be replaced. It cannot protect you from the unbearable grayness of life in which hope can't even be bought on the austere-plan. There is not enough of a future in Cuba to accommodate the exercise in trying that a credit card demands.

When there is no future to be had, people make do as the present, and if the present can offer nothing but a kind of nihilism, well, nihilism suits for some interesting choices. There are, for example, the teenage rockers who have injected themselves with the AIDS virus because in Cuba, AIDS will get them into a state sanatorium with decent food and the permission to wear their hair long and their blue jeans are now they like.

Even for those for whom death is not an option, there is the question of just how much dreaminess one is willing to accept, knowing that it is possible to alleviate the malaise, provided you have dollars, provided you are willing to do the things that will get you those dollars. Is it worse to fuck a man for a VCR than to fuck him for a loaf of bread?

The Guevaras, paraphrasing Emiliano Zapata, had an answer to questions like this: It is better to die on one's feet than to live on one's knees. Easy for Guevaras to say—he made a good career move, dying in Bolivia, his unshamed assumed belief: really act in Fidel's name: it's hard to have ideas on an empty stomach. Perhaps he has forgotten the costly—the hunger of a different kind: that was it when there are no longer any ideals.

Please understand, the Cubans say, everything in the country is for sale. There is no moral center to life now. Once, the moral center was the family, but the families are scattered from here to Miami, divided by dollars, made crazy by the lack of living space. Love is hard to come by; people get married for the obligatory log of beer provided by the state, bear that they then sell on the black market for dollars. The revolution was meant to replace the family as a moral center, but the revolution has had to make a few concessions. It has saved the businesses and enriched the people.

"We are living in a time of no kindness," says one of the poems. "That doesn't exist here. Everywhere there is envy, and people value things that are not true, and everyone is very selfish now, and it is very scary in my heart."

If you are a woman writing that story, then you have to ask yourself what you would do, and what you would do it for. And if you are an American, you have to ask what it means when the only poetry left is the poetry of material things, how far from hope do you have to get, and, on the

The names of the circuits may have been changed.

In Cuba, a doctor earns the equivalent of about three dollars a month; a prostitute, fifty dollars in an evening.

particular scale, at this particular time, what is the difference, really, between the way it is in China and the way it is here?

Finally, there was this that brought me to Cuba, a kind of tall-telling aperçu of the dirty, disturbing morality of it all, an observation offered by a foreign correspondent who has seen a thing or two.

"It doesn't matter what a man tells himself when he goes to a prostitute," he says. "On some level, he knows he's going to fuck his high school sweetheart. He won't find her on Bowdoin Street. But in Cuba, he will."

HER NAME IS LAURA. The first cousin who owned her old car she had a face like a doll. She is just eighteen, still a high school student. Sweet and friendly, she is beautiful in the improper way of the baby of the family and of that time in a woman's life when she first discovers the negative power of her sexuality. She looks about her with a polite grin, vivid attention to her surroundings. She is dressed in jeans, flowered knee breeches, and she has lowered her shoulders, straight brown hair in a ridiculous turn-of-the-century bun back her head. She is sitting with her friend Carmel Carnabon in the lobby of the Riviera, talking to a couple of Cuban-born Dances, who light the girls' cigarettes before heading, a few moments later, for the glowings, without them.

It is an off night at the Racines, the anatomy of the death of some martyr to the revolution, and the disco is closed. I sit there with my stepdaughters, who is fluent in Spanish, watching Laura. We are new to Cuba, my stepdaughter tells her. We are interested in what it is like for women here. We ask, as a studiously casual way what they are doing here. They look at each other uncertainly. It is Laura who begins. "Mujer a mujer," she says "Woman to woman." I have to smile. In Spanish, at first, something of a smile.

CUBAN WOMEN DON'T WALK, they swoon," says the woman who was once Castro's mistress. "They are high-stroned and they have big buttocks and small waists, and when they walk, everything is in motion, from the arse to the shoulder." Nany Revueltas laughs. "The soldiers had a terrible time in the beginning, trying to teach them to march in the militia. They just could not see the waist out of them."

Naty Revuelta lives in a tall elegant though crumbling villa, with an ancient, aragonese mother, and the paintings and the objects of a woman's beauty once admired for her. And Natty was, and is, superbly beautiful: blond and green-eyed, a dazzlingly sensual woman, a haute bourgeois whose love affair with Camilo in the films would have led to marriage if Natty had not played the safer bet, choosing to stay with her doctor husband rather than join Frida in the Sierra Mixteca. But she is not a woman to let reason dim the flesh.



Figueri's market: Before, the tourists didn't know how desperate things were. Now they say, "How much? I can only give you a couple bucks."

Everything is so subdued now, Natty says, even the pain. In August, the Malecón was covered with young women saying goodbye to their boyfriends as the men set out to sea in molas made of lashed-together taras and scraps of wood. "It was a tragedy without drama."

And what of the parents? Many things are elegant headlines: "Everyone lives to solve immediate problems. After you've sold the gold mine and grandfather's watch, what do you do?" she asks Cohen, she says, have always had a bit of dignity, but they have lost a lot with the ad hoc life. It is not just the parents but the pretty selves on the streets, the children who are now taught to beg. "All these things are the result of our parents."

IT IS SO PERFECT. Luan is saying. She is sitting with Camille on the bed in my stepdaughter's hotel room, studying herself in the mirror as she talks. She is wearing tight blue jeans, a denim shirt, and casual sandals. She smells a cigarette with the daring muskiness of a bird. One has to be so careful, she says. In the neighborhood, there is nowhere to go, there is nothing to do. No one has any work. Everyone goes to kill the aunt, and everyone knows your business.

The neighbors are always asking questions, she says. The questions reach like tentacles into whatever privacy you had

At first, it seemed so gross, sleeping with a man for money. But Laura wanted to have soap and be clean.

stared away for yourself? The neighbors will say "Where did you get that dress, and how much did you pay for it?" And if you tell them it cost a hundred dollars, Laura says, they know that a woman bought it for you, and they will call the police.

And while the police may turn a blind eye to the women in the lobby and on the street, they listen to their informants. A woman convicted of prostitution can go to jail for a year or two—Laura and Carola say they have a lot of friends behind bars. Prostitution, after all, is illegal in Cuba, despite the fact that some of the finest dancers in the world perform at the front desk of the Hotel Riviera to bring a Cuban woman to his room goes to the state. The conservative bureaucracy casts a shadow over Laura's perfectly arched eyebrows. The cynicism that such government-sanctioned hypocrisy engenders is as much a part of Cuban life now as rain and Coke in the afternoons.

We ask her why her neighbors call the police. Her life has been for everyone in Cuba? "The older people believe in the revolution," she says. "The revolution has given them a lot, and they have given to a lot, and they say what we do is against the revolution, that everyone is supposed to have the same."

Carola—blonde, softer, quieter—gently interrupts. Her grandfather, she says, fought in the Sierra Maestra with Castro. Since she was a child, she has heard she must be "very, very" like him. Carola's kind of spirit, I would listen to Radio Martí, and he would say, "Turn it off, Carola. I didn't fight for this trash." The old people laugh at an *Almanaque*—something that was never there in the first place.

Before they begin, Laura and Carola looked down at the pictures. It seemed so gross, the idea of going to bed with a man for money. But she didn't want to die with Laura, she wanted to dress nicely, to have soap and hair cream. One night when she was sixteen, she was a mess, an Italian, at a discotheque, and he invited her over to his youth. It was he who told her she had the face of a doll, and before she left, he gave her some underwear, a pair of jeans, and a hundred dollars. She says he didn't touch her.

But then she met another man, at another disco. This time, it was the Havana Club at the Hotel Consulado, the one where the most beautiful women go, and the competition is intense. He was Mexican. It wasn't a difficult decision to sleep with the man. While he was inside her, Laura just thought about the money and how she would spend it. She didn't think about the disco again until the money he gave her ran out. Gradually, it became a regular thing, to go to the

and guess her hips, she is such a proper little bourgeois wife trying to wear that it is hard to imagine her in bed with a man for love or for money.

In bed, she says, you have to think quickly. She matters on condoms. If a man wants to have sex more than once, you have to say "Once is one hundred dollars, and again is one hundred dollars more." Most of them won't pay for a second time she says, and so she leaves. I look at her slight body, think about her in a dark hotel room with a softly lit bed, and wonder.

There are times they will not cross, things they will not do. It is important to Laura and Carola's sense of themselves as not really prostitutes that I believe that there is never any oral sex, for instance—there's no love involved, so why would you do that? No oral sex, either. Once, a man wanted Carola, she says, but only if he could take her from behind. A few moments later, she saw a girl leaving the disco with that man, and she thought, "Oh, please, poor thing, I feel sorry for you."

We laugh, woman to woman, as if we were fellow soldiers in the trenches. She says, then, after all, we are women, and they commit the same sin: a lot of truth and fantasy.

Right now, in Cuba, it is possible for some women—some men, for that matter—to maintain a level of fantasy about what they do. The Havana Club is not the Tenderloin. Laura has not been beaten, she says, never had a brush with the law or harassment that might cause her to reconsider her claim to an amateur's status. But then Laura and Carola talk about the times the men finish with them and then refuse to pay them and how there is nothing they can do, because a man will tell the police they are thieves and the police always believe a foreigner over a Cuban, and how they leave the hotel with nothing but a sour note and a tear.

Ma, says Laura, the men and their drunken desires and the meanness of the dance have not changed her. It is only the hours of the day, she says. For the rest of the day she goes back to her family and leads a totally normal life, it is possible, she says, to forget all about that other world.

Besides, she says, she will be leaving soon. There is an uncle in Sacramento, and one day he will send for her and she will go to the States, and in the States she will become famous. She will be like Whitney Houston—and she is young enough to believe this.

Before she leaves, Laura gives me a picture of herself. It is a color Polaroid of a young girl in a flowered dress, sitting on a bus. It is night, and a moonlight, shining through the uncurtained window, creates a grumpy shadow above her head. The girl is caught in three-quarter profile. Her legs are crossed. In her left hand, balanced carefully on her knee, is a can of Olay's beer. She holds a cigarette stiffly still in the other.

But the picture haunts as well because of the look in Laura's eyes: wild, contained, and utterly blank.

THE PROSTITUTION MAN shocked everyone," says Martha González. "I used to be very unusual to see people holding hands in public. Now, it's walking around, nothing special." But she agrees, the so-called is and always has been intensely sexual. It was not a place where the Catholic Church ever took deep roots, except as a counter for the Soviet Union. But it was always a place that knew how to use decorum to feel alone. She often confides in the fact that Cuban men, sitting at tables on the beaches, will get very excited, "no me voya" it is not completely gone. "But the common complaint was that he was seeing all about her." I saw a man who looked like a crab—he was old, very old—and he was with this beautiful young woman. He had to be paying very high.

Martha is fifty-nine, a small, brown, very woman with short-cropped steel gray hair, a voice hardened by the merciless Cuban cigarette, and a spirit composed of a confounding mixture of unbridled imagination and an idealist's boundless hope. She was in Mexico the day Batista fell. She helped liberate the Cuban embassy there and flew back to her homeland on one of the first airplanes carrying back the victorious revolutionaries. "There was nothing, nothing we wouldn't do," she says. "They didn't even have to ask, nothing we wouldn't give. No one worked from eight to five, you worked around the clock. The husbands were open. We had a world to conquer, a world to give to our grandchildren."

Martha's grandson is now five years old, and she is hard-pressed to buy a present for him. She gets by on a meagerly small pension and the work she can do translating letters for Cuban television. Still, she cries when Castro announced that the time had come to make concessions, the consensus he had wanted they would accept. She found herself laughing at her first husband, but it wasn't that—she was leaving the words out loud, the ones that said it really was over.

Martha has agreed to help me interview people, but she tries gently to persuade me to expand my story to all the women who are finding other ways to live in the old before present than in the regime Cuba. I listen sympathetically, thinking of a research biologist I met who is cooking dinner for a dollar a plate to make extra meat, who would die, she says, before she took money for sex.

But it is the other choice that interests me: the women who are doing what they do because they can think of no reason not to.

Which is why the journey became the target for the envy and animosity that have filled the vacuum left by the collapse of socialism's egalitarian promise, even when the promise only ensured that everyone had nothing. It is why a lot of Cuban women have the money for their long hair. You need dollars to buy shampoo. No dollars means short hair, the sacrifice of a cherished sexual talisman, and that does not come easily in a country where women wear four-inch heels to wait three hours for a bus that may never come.

Martha doesn't hate the justice, but it is her own hardened sense of principle that underscores the troubling, so-called narcissism of many of the women we meet. To her, the choice they've made is in part a matter of acquired prync-



Above: Carola and Laura visit the room at the Palace. Left: Carola's hard-won wardrobe.

dance twice or three times a week, because the money always ran out.

Most of the money goes to clothes and makeup, even though Laura keeps a lipstick lock after it has become bare and cracked, reusing it with a few drops of cooking oil from the kitchen. She lives at home with her mother, a chemical engineer and her brother, who is studying engineering at college. No, they know nothing of what she does. She says she lives in fear of her mother finding out.

"You look different from the others," I say, thinking of how her white hair stood out in the black of Paris.

"You have to have intelligence to do this," she says defiantly, with that partially healed self-confidence earned to eighteen. "You have to go out with a purpose, with an idea of what you want, that you're going out to make money to buy a TV, for example. The other women are not intelligent, and they do not respect themselves. You have to be in control."

They look like older men, the ones with Robert, or, at the very least, leather shoes. The younger ones wear only sex, she says. The older men were company, they spend more time talking and buying you things.

"I miss them like dogs," says Laura, thrilling to her own secret. "I treat them like that because I have a strong character. One has to demand respect as a woman. You have to say, 'It's like this, we're here for the moment, you give me the money and I go home, no kissing, no hugging in front of people, because what people say matters to me.' And in the way she puts down a strand of hair, straightens her back,



"They were born with something given to them. They didn't have to fight for basic needs to be met. We food and education and housing. They have different needs than we did. They want things we never knew existed."

It was, in other words, never their revolution, but a real Martha's revolution. It was her passionate idealism; it was her broken heart. "There isn't a more beautiful love story than that country lived with the revolution," she says. "And in the same measure that you loved, that is the measure to which you are devoted."

IT IS LATE IN THE MORNING, the sun is bright and benevolent, and we rocket through the streets in the ancient car Martha has rented for us. Even in the gusty light, Havana is like a dream, a crumbling, decaying beauty wandering through tattered colonnades and peeling paint, shadowed by a sometimes remote—an intensely sexual place where all the senses are awakened by the climate, by the light, by the smell of the sea, by the nearness of the earth, only to be subdued by the amazingly innocent culpability of its compromised people.

Inside the rusting, rattling car, a figure changes against the windows, not yet ready to exchange night for day. Betty has been out late. She's walking home late, safe from the small restaurant where she and her friend Margot work when a man stopped her and took her back to the Hotel Condesa where she had frequent all about her agreement to meet us. This had not daunted Martha, who rather than morning alarmed the reception desk, posing as an aunt looking for her wayward niece. She combed the registration books and located Betty out of a bungalow occupied by a burglar and quite ardent Cuban.

We stop on the corner of a neighborhood street to pick up Margot, and then we head for Betty's father's house, a place where we can still without attracting too much curiosity.

The house is dark and cold—Betty's father likes his air-conditioning up high and dry. He is a mechanic. He fans through his books of dolls, which replace the maid in the kitchen about two to accommodate her.

Betty is twenty-one, dressed in cutoff blue jeans and a dishdashona black shirt over a lacy black bra. She has short ashen hair and large eyes and a lovely mouth set in a faint smile winning from the latest slip of fate. Seven months ago, she was married, possessed of a degree in French and a job in the Ministry of Communications. But just weeks a month is not enough to put food on the table for herself, her mother, and her seven-year-old daughter. Behind the sleepiness etched in her face is a kind of stunned quality that could only be understood if it might have been gained from the transparent skin and the lacy black bra.

Margot is the neighbor of the over-black haired, narrow-eyed, with a permanent anger etched into her lips. She is wearing blue jeans cut off haphazardly at the knee, a denim work shirt, untucked. She is openly gay—a rarity in Cuba—but her clients are men.

Betty and Margot are ten years older than Laura and Camille; they can no longer master the energy that drives them. The first man with whom Betty had sex for money was an Italian she had met through friends. He had taken her to a fancy restaurant for dinner. He had told her he wanted to sleep with her, and she asked for a hundred dollars. "Too much," he told her, saying to discover that this was not a no-

more encounter. "In Cuba, you can go anywhere you want for thirty dollars."

After that first time, Betty says, she was very depressed. "It was very hard. Until then, I had had a normal life. I loved, I got married, I had a baby. These are people who do this because they like it or just for the disco and the marijuana, they are with a man, they watch themselves off, and that's that. But when you have led a normal life, then you know what you have done, and it's very depressing." How long did it take to get over the depression? Betty shrugs. "You put in a cassette and you move it," she says. "You're not going to die from it, because you are prepared to do what you have to do."

They do what they have to do for forty dollars if it comes to that, and it often does, and the sex is not as pretty or as comfortable as Laura would have us believe. Margot agrees when Betty says she has never been asked for sex. "I was with an old Cuban, he had an onetime," she says. "We tried all night to find some. We even went to the hospital, the special hospital for foreigners, but we couldn't get them to let us be with the anal sex. When she got up, she said to herself, 'Well, after being homosexual, now I'm getting this old Cuban sex, and he has killed my ass with milk. What does this make me? A leprosy?'"

Everyone laughs and Betty notices that Betty's father has come down the stairs. There is an embarrassed pause, but in fact he wants to join the conversation. He wears everyone dark men, neat, in small glasses, and then sits down on the sofa next to my explanation.

How does he feel about the men who sleep with his daughter? He is forty-eight, a shambling, weak mouthed man with another family to support—he is the father of a two-month-old son. He understands the men's side of it, he says. A young, clean girl is such a bargain in Cuba—he understands they're very expensive in New York. Recently he was at the Marina Hemingway, he says, and a sixteen-year-old girl came up to him and said, "Do you want me? Because if you have me and don't like me, you have to pay me." He seems rather pleased with that. He knows that he is clearly considering it as a trade in his own attraction, not "but to go back to your original question," he says, "how does it make me feel? I make me feel sad."

I wonder how sad it makes him feel when my twenty-three-year-old stepdaughter tells him later that he asked her out, talking her how much he likes younger women.

ALL THE JINETERS WANT to find husbands. The scores of the ones who do are scattered like pine needles, gold coins on the beach. No one has actually asked for a change of mind. Every day, however, someone who has I begin to think they are all apocryphal, particularly in the meetings, in the elevators, when I look into the faces of the men and the women they have just been with. But then I meet Harry Jorgensen.

Harry is a big, goofy looking guy with bushy shoulders and wavy eyes and a large, sunburned nose. He is standing outside the Riviera, waiting for a taxi, and next to him is a Valencian-impression, burly, orange-haired, a Valencian dressed in green velvet that drapes the nipples of her braided breasts and orange sash that does look to conceal her beautiful ass. She takes no notice of Harry as he helps her into a taxi—a black-and-white glider, no melting

"The first time was very hard," Betty says. "Until then, I had a normal life: I loved, I got married, I had a baby."

looks—and it seems I have witnessed just another of the many transactions I witness every night and every day.

But no—the Cuban man has done as duty, the goals of lust and simply have reached a dot. Harry Jorgensen is a happy man, though not, perhaps, with quite as much ease as the women he put into the taxis, Anita, Anita, who just the day before became his bride.

He is thirty-one and had never been married. He works in an office of the U.S. Embassy processing visas. The next day, the two of them will be in Germany, meeting Harry's mother and dad, who live with Harry in a small house in the mountains, seventy-five miles from anywhere, and who have no idea that they now have a daughter-in-law.

Harry orders a beer at the small bar in the Riviera's lobby. It is not his first beer of the morning, and it will not be his last. He shakes his big head slowly, still digesting the thing he has done. "I will have to buy her clothes," he says. "When we get to Frankfurt, the first thing I will have to do is buy her clothes. She thinks even the air-conditioning here is too cold."

What was it about Anita, I ask, that made him decide to marry her?

Harry looks at me incredulously. "She's very warm," he says finally. "Cuban women are very warm."

And German women?

"German women are mean."

He worried about his new Cuban bride? To tell with German women? Harry says firmly that he did worry about one thing. "They know only the night and the night and his pants, but in Germany, people wake up early."

For Harry I think poor Anita. I say as much to Martha later as the reality car carries us into the first-of-all of Cuban traffic. "Don't cry for Anita," says Martha dryly. "Anita will be just fine, and so will Harry, at least until Anita discovers the street."

ON OUR LAST NIGHT in Cuba, my stepdaughter and I have dinner with Laura and her family. A flurry of phone calls—small East, given the Cuban phone system—keeps the Hotel Riviera. Are we really coming? Because already they have spent the money begun the preparations. We won't change our minds!

At five o'clock, Laura comes to get us. She is wearing a long, loose top over bell bottoms cut from a women's pants. There are cork sandals on her feet, and her hair is tied up in a topknot, her lipstick is pink, the only makeup on her face. Carefully, we rehearse the story we are meant to tell her mother about how and where we met.

Her neighbor drives us to a tidy neighborhood of semi-detached houses by the beach. On the narrow porch, her grandfather sits in a rocking chair, chainy brown eyes staring from a vacant vision to stare at us in amazement.



Her revolution never did. "Anita has different needs than we did," says Martha Gosselin. "They want things we never knew existed."

Inside, the house is small and dim. A dining room with old wooden furniture and frayed upholstery leads to a small dining room, where a pink linoleum table is covered with a lace tablecloth. A short hall leads to Laura's room, where a battered gay caddy baby sits on a child-size rocking chair. There is barely room for a small bed and an old wooden dresser. On the dresser is a Cuban poster and a small, plush cat outfitted in Cuban peasant dress.

Laura's father is in the kitchen, preparing with some hesitation, an enormous unidentified fish. He has been divorced from Laura's mother for years, but whenever business there might have been between them was dragged off living up. He is worried about the fish. "I've never cooked a fish like this before," he says. "I've never seen a fish like that before."

Laura had been delegated to buy the fish.

"She knows nothing about these things," says her mother with a rueful smile. "That's my fish. She has never had to do anything around the house."

Laura's mother is forty-seven, her fleshy, red face surrounded by a drooping coronet of curls. She wears denim culottes and a coquettish looking, pale yellow belted polyester blouse with puffed sleeves. She has just returned home from her job at a sugar plant, the job that is the prelude to long evenings, she says, of nodding on her rocking chair, thinking of things she can do to get dollars. For a while, she sewed backpacks, but now everyone is making shoes, and lately she has begun to make lingerie for her son to sell on the weekends. The money he brings back buys the cooking oil.

Her son just turned nineteen, she did not have ten dollars to give him so that he might go to the disco to celebrate. I watch Laura as her mother says that, but her head is bent over the rice she is meant to be cooking, and I can't see her eyes. Her brother has an open, ingenious face, he seems much younger than his sister.

We sit around the table and drink rum, all except Laura, who sits drinking. She has to keep a clear head for the night to come. She becomes the perfect heavy little sister,

smoking faces at her father as he talks about the revolution, poking her brother, looking intently bored as the tale turns to socialism and the dream that it died. The cigarette she is holding looks incongruous, as if she were playing dress-up, which in a way she is—she began smoking so that she might ask a man for a light.

Laura's father gets drunk quickly, thumping the breakfast table with his fist, talking about how it was better to believe in the humanity of socialism and watch it fail than to believe in the hollowed promises of capitalism. His eye-roll's attention wanders—she has heard these speeches before. She watches the boredom on her daughter's face. The infrequent silences are filled with the sound of Statens songs: "You've got to change your evil ways . . ." on an old Rusev-made record player.

And then it is ten o'clock, and Laura gets up from the table, ten o'clock, and Laura slips away to her room. She takes off the bell bottoms and the matching top, takes off the pink hair bra she is wearing underneath. The white linen dress, the same one she was wearing the night I met her, floats over her head. She undoes the neckline and brushes out the shining brown hair until it spills down her back. She washes her face and applies the mascara and the soft, sure lines of eyeshadow that take the mangled out of her eyes, and correct her lid lips to an ancient, voluptuous red, and the transformation is complete. She does not look like a seductress or a hooker or even a girl going out on a date. The Italian was right. She looks like a doll, with a doll's sexuality, with a doll's sense of sin.

Laura emerges from her room with the brush in her hand, and at the table everyone looks up, and just as quickly everyone looks down. By the sideboard, she begins again to brush her hair. The faces at the table freeze, her brother looks tense and frightened, and her father begins to talk more loudly and quickly than ever. I look at her mother. Her generous, smiling mouth is set; her eyes widen with worry, and it is clear she knows everything. Suddenly, there seems to be no one left in the room, only the he and she agree that this needs to be secret.

Laura walks away from her mother's house, eyes bright and unseeing, putting the thin gauge of love and hope and once-bright hormones as if they were umbrellas that might cling to her shiny hair if she is not careful. Her mother follows her out the door. "Be careful," she says. And she says it again. "Be careful."

Eleven o'clock and the driveway to the disco at the Commodore is thronged with all the girls who want to get in, girls who take a stranger's arm and beg to be escorted in, because it costs ten dollars, because you must be with a tourist, poor Laura. Candy, my stepdaughter, and I walk into a large, dark room densely packed with people, so that young women and old men, circling, bring candles. Off to the side is a large, square, freestanding bar where already the bartender is dancing to the beat of the music—a clattering blend of old Altha hits, homegrown salsa, and bubblegum rock—pouring Cokes for five dollars and rubs limes for ten, holding the limes high over his head and snapping them in the thin light to inspect their suitability.

At ten, it is grotesque, watching the woman brush their breasts against some doughy man in a bell shirt as they ask him for a drink, counterpointing the request with the overripe rhythms of an obviously forced laughter. Other times, it is comedy, just another song about the same old

story. A beautiful girl blind in a night and dress in dancing with a short fat guy who is so bloused on her's barely breathing, his arms wrapped around her, his eyes closed, his lips pressed in new, gaping for air. During one of these slow revolutions, the blond watches me watching her, takes note of my expression. She laughs, raising her eyes to the ceiling in rueful acknowledgments, and I begin to laugh because, after all, there is something so ludicrous and useless about the delusion she is indulging, and I know that she, at least, will be all right. She is happy enough with the entire gleam of it all, and I don't know whether that makes it worse or better.

From our stools on one side of the bar, we can watch Laura make her move. In the beginning, she sits sipping a Coke, looking the look of the very cool American and not. When the music starts, she gets up halfheartedly and starts to dance by herself—mimicked opening procedure for attracting a tourist in the tourist handbook, but not really Laura's style. She can't be bothered. Before long, she sits back down and asks the youngish, not unattractive man sitting next to her for a light. It will turn out later that he is German. They begin to talk, leaning close to each other's ears, thence to the constant volume of the music.

For a long time, it is touch-and-go with the tourist. He ignores her to talk to his friend, a bigger, older guy, and Laura seems to ignore him, too, except for an occasional nod and wisp of glance. It looks to me like a lost cause, but then she makes a bold move. Without a backward glance, she gets up and walks away from him to move closer to the dance floor.

The tourist watches her the back of her head, the way the spotlight on the dance floor makes the white linen glow. Finally, he walks up to her and asks her to dance. She has won. The tourist is saying, "I can't see me loving" nobody but you, for all my life . . ."—the kind of song that can only set your teeth on edge.

That is how we left Laura that night, her eyes bright with triumph. When she realized we were leaving, she ran to the door to say goodbye and to ask my stepdaughter one more time if she would let him take the black suitcase she was wearing. She leaved on goodbye. She was sad, she said, that we were leaving soon so early in the morning. She would not be awake to take us out in a if.

BUT, IN FACT, WE DID SEE LAURA that morning. She was sitting in the lobby when we came downstairs. Things had gone badly after we left, she said. A girl she knew had given her a watch to sell for thirty dollars, but the first man she approached had run off with it. She tried to borrow the money from the tourist, but he wanted nothing to do with her after that, and the girl was so angry with her and cursed such a commission that they were both thrown out of the disco.

That morning she wore a dusty pink linen dress, her face was scabbed, clean, and it crumpled now in the way children's faces do when reality, no less cruel for being mundane, imposes itself on their embossed wishes. I gave her the money to pay for the watch, knowing it was in my over her head, knowing things would end badly for her.

Be careful, I found myself saying to her be careful. But I said it in English, and my stepdaughter, wisely, didn't bother to translate. ■

How to grow grizzled, flabby, forgetful, cranky, fragile, and lonely gracefully BY BRUCE JAY FRIEDMAN

The Slightly Older Guy's Guide to Life

Illustrations by Drew Friedman

IT TAKES HIM A LITTLE LONGER than it once did to get out of restaurant booths. But once he's on his feet, he stretches out a bit and breaks into the easy casual stride of a professional athlete, which he may never have been. He thinks about how a lot of his getting enough done? It seems that everywhere he goes he hears the word *postpone* or *reschedule* is directed at him.

The Slightly Older Guy goes to pieces if someone criticizes his work, and he's become cautious about his appeal to women. He worries about "foliage" a lot. Shouldn't he be

reading Thoreau before it's too late? He hesitates before taking out a long-term loan because of fear of being surprised by a Mafiosi. And he wishes the medical establishment would make up its mind about the prostate. (Do something about it, or leave it alone.)

If you wake up one morning with the sinking feeling that you're a Slightly Older Guy, don't panic. Not just yet. For one thing, you're in good company: Chevy Chase is a Slightly Older Guy, and Bill Clinton is becoming one as we speak. Former secretary of the treasury Lloyd Bentsen may

Think of eliminating those sexual positions that require strenuous hip, leg, and back movements.

be out of the loop, but you still have Rod Stewart for company. Dustin Hoffman has Slightly Older Guy written all over him, with all the attendant connotations for his career. CNN is loaded with Slightly Older Guys, and NBC's *Tam Brown*, despite being wannabe, has been one for some time.

It would be nice to report that there are rich, golden opportunities ahead for the Slightly Older Guy, but quite honestly very few come to mind. There's folk dancing, of course. If you're a folk dancer, you should be positioned nicely but if you're part of the vast majority of Slightly Older Guys who don't folk dance, the territory you're about to enter is bleak and uncharted. Monks cannot be made.

What follows are some thoughts on how to survive this rough patch so that you're in decent condition when you break out into the clear and become a Considerably Older Guy—at which time you'll be sought out for your advice on the deficit and asked if we should go to war.

"It's true I'm getting on a bit," you might concede begrudgingly, but hold on a second. I'm fucking fine, and I didn't have a clue in the world until this subject came up. Before I start worrying, here do I know for sure I'm a Slightly Older Guy?"

To begin with, there's no point in worrying about it. Once you've crossed the line, there's no turning back, and worrying will only make it worse. But in case you need proof, here are some signs that you've become an official member of the club:

■ **You're sitting at a bar** that's filled with attractive young people on their way home from work. You catch the adoration in the mirror of a flirt who is clearly out of place and wonder, with some irritation, why he doesn't push on to a waiting, hole that's more appropriate to his obviously advancing years. In horror, you realize, *He was a maniac, that's me!*

■ **You notice cracks in your body**—a slight sharpening of the elbows, an unworkable latexwork under the eyes, an odd new configuration of the knees. This can't quite put your finger on it—maybe not exactly knobby—but they're not the knees you once knew and loved. Come to think of it, they don't perform as effectively as they once did—and your physician has made a subtle mention of arthrosagittal repair, quickly reassuring you that none of these is done virtually every week.

■ **You've had one, or two, or three**—and it's probably time for another go round. It crosses your mind that maybe you ought to hold off for a bit and reason it out, so to speak.

■ **On a bus**, you focus in on an attractive young woman and entertain thoughts about asking her out for a drink. She looks up, smiles, and says sweetly, "Would you care to have my seat?"

■ **It occurs to you** that you've been attending quite a few lucrative seminars—and that controversial topics like "quadrapole bypasses," "organ transplants," and "lip replacements" are right up there with sports scores and the stock market.

■ **You're forced to take a taxi**—a certain friend who's only a few years ahead of you and who admires his intellect and preference for his remarks with the phrase "Now that we're in the twilight years."

■ **You make it through the night** without a trip to the bathroom and consider it a cause for celebration.

Speak, Memory—Please

AT SOME POINT, as a Slightly Older Guy, you're going to find yourself standing in your bathroom wondering what on earth you're doing there.

Your first response might be to pound on the wall and cry "For God's sake, why am I here?" Or, with moderation, to tap your temple encouragingly and proudly, "Come on, pal. You can re-

member what you're in the kitchen. Give it a try."

Memory loss is an unsettling experience, but you're probably past overcoming. What you want to do is simply take hold of yourself, put the whole business out of your mind, and as long as you're in the kitchen, make some productive use of the time. Dice up a cucumber, for example, or get rid of some old ornaments. Once you're engaged in some such purposeful activity, it's likely that as time as it all you'll realize that you came into the kitchen for a liverwurst sandwich. It's possible you've forgotten to buy liverwurst, but that's a different issue.

Discouraging as such an oversight may be, there's probably a simple explanation for it. You may have been preoccupied with some larger concern, such as whether we ought to take a softer position with the Japanese on barley imports or to throw our weight behind China in its efforts to break away from Ukraine. Perhaps you'd been leafing through *The New England Journal of Medicine*, dipped into another one of its cholesterol diatribes, and decided to cut back on your liverwurst consumption. Or

maybe you've just about had it with liverwurst.

Unfortunately, such explanations will be little consolation to the Slightly Older Guy, who'll tend to be extremely sensitive about his memory. Cast the slightest doubt on his ability to recall and he'll supposedly write off a list of the Scotch lagers. What he'll forget is that his memory has always had a few gaps. How many times have you forgotten to pick up a gallon of milk on the way home? Or to come home at all, for that matter?

Was there one time when you could distinguish between Chita Raven and Rita Morano?

Think of your memory—although not quite as robust as it once was—as the good friend that it's always been, enabling you to logic through appointments and to remember fancy dinners you attended on an old wedding-breaker, to blot out unfaked marriages, yet retain to expound about a night spent in the arms of a Swedish fellower, in fact you were ever described as an "ingrate" in a company newsletter and to remember instead the fine-well dinner in your honor, one at which toast were proposed to your sales record and you were sent off with a pair of mono grammed pajamas. In short, focus on a memory that's crinkled out your defame, highlighted your triumphs, and led you to think of your life for the most part as a series of happy events.

Sex and the S.O.G.

YOU NEED NOT SAY goodbye to your sex life, although it's true that you may have to make a few adjustments here and there. To put it in baseball terms, it's no longer routine to rely on your high, hard one.

To survive in the romance league, you've got to develop a slider.

As a first step in moving to the rear tier of your sex life, try to rid yourself of performance anxiety. The very word *performance* is misleading. It isn't as if you have to trot out on stage and play the violin, although once you're in front of the footlights, you will have to do more than just stare at the audience. Remember that you have considerable experience in this area—probably more than you realize!—and it isn't just a matter of having once mistimed erotic sex participation in the Philippines. For example, there are no doubt a wealth of magnificent zones you can call to mind if you take a minute to think

about them. What comes down and you'll be amazed at the length of the list before you even get to the inner thigh. And such that you can call into play with your feet, partner—although there's no need to credit your source when you do. When your best friend sighs and says, "That was wonderful," don't tell her you learned it from a saleswoman at Newman Marcus.

The Slightly Older Guy who's accustomed to working with thirty or forty positions should think in terms of reducing that number to half a dozen or so. Eliminate those that involve a great deal of thrashing about and call for

strenuous hip and leg movements. Also ones that require the use of some overused appearance to keep your balance. Ideally, you want to keep the positions that offer maximum comfort and support so you won't do any permanent damage to your lower back.

A word here about your equipment, or the Big Balls, as you may have generously dubbed him after a successful romp in Tijuana many moons ago. It isn't as if he's been off on his own all these years. He's been with you through every campaign, a close and valued member of the team who's stuck by you through thick and thin, which is more than you can say for some of your friends. He may have looked better and there, but he's never given less than his all in your

behalf. And on those few occasions when he's gone on furlough, he's soon returned cheerfully to the fray. He was there with you at your first dance, every bit as crumbly and uncertain as you were, and stood on even though there were times when he seemed at the limit, ready to do his duty, only to discover that his services were not required, forcing him to retire to the barracks in frustration.

He's shared the arduous and rollicking days of your youth, when he was asked to go forward blindly into unfamiliar and bizarre situations. He's with you now, at a presumably more peaceful time, just as loyal as ever, but perhaps a bit weary now that you've become a Slightly Older Guy. He'll be a Slightly Older Guy too! Just be patient and don't expect more from him than you yourself can deliver. That the old boy was kindless and respect. When the bugle calls, you may be surprised to find that he will rally round and march proudly at your side, once again bringing home to your partner—the basis of a Slightly Older Guy who's still very much in the parade.



They're in good company now—Rod Stewart is a Slightly Older Guy, and so are Clancy Brown and Ed Bradley.



Ellie Morfessman isn't really interested in you—the just wants to see where her thingy is (M. Brad Pitt is headed

A morbid stratagem, when losing at tennis, is to whisper, "That chemo sure takes a lot out of you."

Tough, Tough

YOU MAY BEGIN to find that your feelings are much closer to the surface than ever before. An unexpected phone call, the failure of a hardware store to grant you a discount, a young woman addressing you as "sir"—any one of these occurances will be enough to plunge you into despair. You may start thinking someone's out to get you, but you've merely become a victim of heightened sensitivity. You're a slightly Older Guy, it goes with the territory.

The success of a friend or contemporary, once a minor nuisance, will now come across as a personal affront. Be careful that your response isn't disproportionate. Don't start naming an opponent's friend's appointment as adviser to the divinity program and forget that your own background is in domestic drama. Or become annoyed at Joe Pesci for being chosen over you as Best Supporting Actor at the Academy Awards when you've never been in front of a camera and Pesci has been slaving away at his craft for years.

Your minor obligations here is to keep Pesci and get some kind of life.

When it comes to women, the Slightly Older Guy may find himself becoming particularly short-tempered if a woman flirts with him; it won't be for a second occasion to him that she finds him attractive. His first impulse will be to get out of town before she comes to her senses. Or, at the other extreme, he'll start to behave too aggressively, marching up with unusual boldness to beautiful women. And when, for example, supermodel Ella Macpherson politely declines his invitation to go to Barbados for the weekend, he is absolutely certain she's turning him down because he's a Slightly Older Guy.

Here again, a little detachment is in order. For one thing Ella Macpherson might not care for Barbados. Maybe it's just not her scene. Or it may be that she's been there on so many shoots that Barbados is coming out her ears. Or perhaps she's got something going with Brad Pitt and wants to see how it plays out before she makes any new commitments.

"That's all very nice," you might say to yourself, "but if I were a young guy I'd bet she would've hopped right on that plane."

Not necessarily. Even if that were the case, the truth has wanted to find out just a little bit more about you. Give her some room and she might surprise you by com-

ing round. And if for some reason she doesn't, you can always try Claudia Schiffer.

Grooming Tips for the S.O.G.

A question you might as well address right up front is whether you want to try an errand. At one time, this may have seemed an affliction, but now that accountants and captains of industry show up with their yachts, you're able to feel left behind if you don't pop one in.

A great fear has always been that if you wear one, some one is going to beat you up—but the very people who once concerned you are now pining around with envy of their own and starting to worry that you might beat them up.

If you decide to go on an evening, the worst-case scenario is that you'll run into an unruly type who's also wearing one. There may be some worry circling in the area—you might meet each other up a bit—but the chances are you'll go your separate ways.

Once you've committed to wearing an earring, you'll have to decide which ear you want to put it in and exactly where on the ear you want it placed. It's no secret that the positioning of an earring can indicate sexual preference, but it can also signal any thing from sexual rights activities to support for the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka.

For most you might not have strong feelings about either case. So do your research.

For starters at least, you'll want to select an earring that's small and inconspicuous, although not so small that people will strain to see whether it is indeed on earring or a pimple. Avoid gaudy, tacklike affairs that are not only attention getting but will also weigh you down to one side, potentially causing dizziness.

For your first public appearance, you can deal with your insecurity either by revealing the earring gradually, capping one hand over it and giving peeks at it as an occasional passerby, or by screaming into a walkman, but ordering a hairdresser, and flaunting it boldly at rowdies.

After several evenings, you'll find it's become part of your look. Rarely will someone cry out, "There comes the guy with the earring."

Hat, too, plays a tremendous part in contemporary life. There's no question that Clinton's hat, saving the election in his favor. Bush had hat, too, but it was that thin, floppy kind, which is not a vote-getter. You have to go back to

Eisenhower to find a bald president, and that's because Adlai Stevenson had even less hair than he did.

Small wonder that the Slightly Older Guy is deeply concerned about his hair and perhaps going bald.

One way to deal with this is to use one of the many products that are designed to change your hair color overnight. If you're sensitive about trying one, you can always apply it in a small border town where no one knows you. If it doesn't work out or causes a rash even in the small border town, just stay put for a month or so until it all grows out, then return home with your old hair, and to one will be the wiser.

A wig is another solution, but if you choose this option, make sure to stay with a top-of-the-line product and not just any old head that's on sale at Woolworth. Ask Terry Ferretti where he got his. You don't want people pointing each other and saying, "Did you see the rag on that guy?"

Inevitably, with the onslaught of youth crawling all around you, you'll consider wearing your hair in a ponytail—assuming, of course, there's enough of it left. The Slightly Older Guy who grows a ponytail often does so in the hope of truncating years off his age and, with luck, losing attention for the lead guitarist of Blind Melon. More specifically, a ponytail is designed to swing the focus away from your forehead, although this can backfire and call attention to your upper-back hair.

Ponytails are not appropriate for every profession. If one thing for them to be mandatory at Teller's, it's quite another to imagine Secretary of State Warren Christopher waving anyone in his entourage to the microphone to announce a change in our stance toward Macedonia.

If you decide to go ahead with a ponytail, keep it at a modest length and usually tie back with a rubber band. There have been stage doofs involving comedienne Imelda Staunton who got her ponytail caught in elevator doors.

Joek Itch

WHILE YOUR GROOMING is in order, you want to make sure that you're a picture of fitness. As a Slightly Older Guy you'll find that tennis is an excellent conditioner, since it can be taken up at any time, no matter how far along the road you've traveled. Tennis also includes a man workout and a belly that's been released is sure to that there's no longer any need to disguise it with collars. There, unfortunately, may already have thinned out your legs, still, no matter

how sprightly they've become, some vigorous play on the tennis court should provide a bit of shape to them.

If you're a beginner, before you go charging out onto the courts, it's advisable to consult a doctor. There are a bewildering number of approaches to the game, and instructions vary wildly in their recommendations.

As a Slightly Older Guy who's never played before, you can trot out on the court and declare with confidence, "I've just taken up the game." Or if you've played a bit as an undergraduate, left the racket, look at it noddily and say, "Amazing. I haven't picked up one of these things in years."

Another successful gambit is to keep out on the court and say with a wince, "We can try a few poems. I just hope the knee holds up."

The serious, too, can be blamed in advance to an extent for poor play ("This is my first time on clay"), or can feign behavior the night before ("If only I hadn't downed that last wine").

A morbid stratagem, in surprisingly wide use, is to whisper honestly, "That chemo sure takes a lot out of you."

Once you've announced your excuse for poor performance, you can sit about playing listlessly, having whipped your opponent of any grade he might have taken in hearing you. Should you score an upset victory, he'll have no choice but to thank you in humiliation.

Off the Rocks

AS A SLIGHTLY older guy, you might consider yourself a moderate drinker—a fellow who broods back a cocktail or two in order to sharpen his appetite and make the world seem a bit more agreeable. And you've no doubt been heartened by the medical finding that drinking when held in check helps guarantee a long and robust life.

No one's sure you have to give up this pleasurable activity. But if your evenings have been passing by in a blur and you can vaguely recall any of the following situations, it may be that you're no longer, strictly speaking, just a moderate drinker.

- You make nightly calls to the White House, demanding an invasion of Canada.
- You can't remember your phone number.
- Several mornings a week, you wake up on lawns.
- Second friends? There, you might want to have a look at what—and how much of it—you've been drinking. Your memory has already taken a pounding. Give it a break.



Don't be stressed about Joe Pesci's career. Keep in mind that he's a success and you've spent your life in the theater.



How may be drinking more than a Slightly Older Guy should if several mornings a week, you wake up on lawns.

Pallimony

THE RULES of friendship for Slightly Older Guys are far from rigid, but you do have to abide certain ones in a while.

"Carl and I don't have to speak," you might say in rehearsal. "Our friendship is beyond that."

That may be true, but do you have to let thirty years go by before calling him? Carl might be an entirely different person now. There might not even be a Carl anymore. So pick up the phone. And don't start wondering why he hasn't called you. Isn't it possible that Carl has fallen on hard times and can't afford a long-distance call?

Life's too short—you got the man a ring.

Wives may come and go, children leave home, but a true friend is in it for the long haul. Short of being thrown out of the house, he'll remain at your side until the closing curtain.

As a Slightly Older Guy, you may decide one night to stop worrying about friends—your own company is all you'll ever need. Eventually, however, you'll discover that there is no substitute for a real friend—ideally one who's on the homey side and can always be counted on to be in some shape than you are.

The Slightly Older Wife

FRIENDSHIP is this. Slightly Older Guy who has somehow managed to stay married—even though he now has a Slightly Older Wife.

There are great advantages to being in this situation. Companionship—shared experiences, an acceptance of your many eccentricities, the willingness to overlook snafus and grating sounds that might prove unappealing to a younger mate. Someone to assist you if you've slipped on an antihypertensive in the bathroom, where a single code word such as "accident" or "kiss flicker" is all that's required in ascertaining a loved one's true position.

With a Slightly Older Wife as a companion, you have no need to fill up a dishwasher with little children. With luck, you may not have to talk at all.

In quite another situation is the Slightly Older Guy who's been comfortably married for a decade or so but feels there's something missing in his life. It's not Tanya, he might say. Tanya's great and I guess I love her. She's my best friend and we get on decently enough in bed. And yet...

And yet? The two plannable words that generally signal a yearning for an eleven-hour marriage—and the desperate feeling that the Slightly Older Guy is fated not to experience one. Never again the stolen kiss in a taxi, the anxious phone call, the inevitable terse song, the dismissal, the anticipation, the damp and sultry conversation on a hot night in August in the city.

Don't delude yourself by thinking that you can keep an eleven-hour romance from the insatiably brilliant Tanya herself. She's bound to guess the instant you present her with the ginkgo-scented bouquet. ("You're seeing another woman, aren't you? Why, Budd, why?")

The wisest move at this point—if it wisdom had anything to do with it—is to do and say as little as possible, and to request for a brief period from Tanya as well as the object of your reformation. If you can manage it, spend a week alone, perhaps on an Indian reservation, allowing your passions to cool—and assuring Tanya with repeated phone calls that you're spending all your time placing bets on keno. At

the end of your trip, you may well decide to change ahead and start your life in sheds by starting what's left of it anew with your fresh discovery. But remember, it's late in the day, and there's always the risk of botching the whole business and eventually ending up with neither Tanya nor her replacement in a rooming house in Santa Monica, there with your lover spots. The safer course is to accept your loss and remain with Tanya, if she'll take you back.

"I've had it with love," you might declare if Tanya has washed her hands of you, wondering if the sentence might not catch fire at a country-woman's lynx.

And then, just as you've resigned yourself to a joyless loveless existence, you might attend a function one night and catch a glimpse across the buffet table of a slender form, an intriguing profile, a heart-breaking cascade of silver hair, all of it capped off by a smoky and engaging laugh.

"Oh, my God," you think, craze of guard, reeling. "Who is she? I've got to meet her."

Then the turn—and it's Tanya.

AS A SLIGHTLY OLDER GUY, you know it's time to get your act together.

"But I don't have an act," you might say. "That's always been the problem."

Then get one. And you can start by trying up love ends. If you have an estranged child on there, call and patch things up. Move for once in your life. And if you've loved someone for thirty years, let that person know before she goes into a nursing home, and before you go into one with her.

Take some positions. If you've been waiting for years on multilateral export controls, come down on one side or the other. Decide once and for all what your feelings are about Jack Kemp.

"But nobody cares what I think," you might say in protest. "There are much sadder guys out there."

That's not quite true. Maybe there were sadder guys, but they may not be out there anymore. That's the whole point. As a Slightly Older Guy, you'll be around for your own, not because anyone is necessarily interested in what you have to say, but because there are so few alternatives.

Start now. Don't wait for a nice weekend. You're only a Slightly Older Guy once.

Beck, please. Who could possibly be down on pants? But don't seek too much or you'll end up resting in it while the pantsless pass by.

Play hard. Drink the wine. Never let it be said that you sit down at the banquet of life and settled for homid overtones.

The world is waiting to see how you deal with the third act of your personal drama. It's not going to be any walk in the park. And anyone says it would be? But someone has to be a Slightly Older Guy, and it might as well be you. Be grateful that you are still around to take on the job.

The very best to you, Slightly Older Guy, as you get to your own affairs and inevitably find the field toward an uncertain goal line. You may not see or hear it, but there's a cheering section out there, made up of others who will be following in your footsteps—a lot sadder than they realize. The less you can do it as a reasonable example for them. Rage, rage against the dying of the light if you absolutely must—and if you think it will do any good—but have the grace to do so in private. And no matter how you choose to proceed, for God's sake, no whining. ■

THE ESQUIRE GUIDE

THE NEW RULES OF THE ROAD

If you haven't shopped for a car lately, you're in for some surprises

By Phil Patton

OUT ON THE STRIP

IT'S AUTOLAND, on Route 22, Springfield, New Jersey—a vast dealer mall comprising DodgeLand, FordLand, ToyotaLand. Gum-chewing receptionists greet you cheerfully. There's a special Asian showroom for speakers of Japanese, Chinese, or Korean. It claims to be one of the largest car dealerships in America, the justification for the huge Ford McHenry-size flag flying above the Camaros and Accords.

Travel to Autoland and no rough-horn up and down Route 22—load with dealerships as the Appian Way was lined with the villas and temples of the Roman aristocracy—and you get an idea of the new landscape in auto sales and service. There, interspersed with diners and fast-food joints, you encounter the complex hierarchy of the Chevy house and the Chrysler pentastar, the Nissan hockey puck and the Mercury hockey stick. In one sense, the strip here looks a lot as it did ten or twenty years ago. But things have changed. The car you buy is less the focus than the way you buy it.

"Total service experience" is the catchphrase at dealer desks, which are now decked out with padded forms and Japanese seducement. Writing notes are more and more like doctors' offices, with free coffee and magazines. Salesmen hound customers worthy of high school classes or circled figures. Range Rover dealers sponsor gourmet picnics. Chrysler cars



Where fast cars sell like fast food.

fully markets the Neon so that its young buyers—Gen X makes who play at least forty hours of video games a week—are one stage, aspirationalists feel. "The members of a club." "Max car company doesn't just want to sell, lease, and service vehicles. It wants to bond with you."

Life on Route 22 has changed in other ways, too. Despite appearances, selling new cars is just a sideline on the strip. In the last five years, leasing has changed the landscape of American motoring as profoundly as did Henry Ford's buy on time Model T or Alfred

Sloan's trade-up policy at General Motors. And leasing programs can foster than ever before. Dealerships now make twice as much selling a used car as a new one—and even more on leases. "Very quality, 'pre-owned' cars—the word is a triumph of American ingenuity—have conquered the strip. For the first time since the vehicle shortage of the World War II era, used car sales rank ahead of new.



Don't
Leave
Home
Without It

Fifty the poor our submissives, is
 whistled in story and song. He
 struggles against a
 widespread, if only implicit,
 conviction that car prices and
 sales policies represent a
 general conspiracy against
 the consumer that only
 forbids and persistence can
 defy. And today, he comes up
 against a buyer better-
 informed than ever, armed
 with lists of lowest prices on
 the Internet.

Know the car you want? A number of services will fax you a listing of any car's dealer-invent cost and manufacturer's suggested retail price, along with standard equipment and options. Pricefax offers such listings for \$30, a second model listing is \$50, and each additional report is \$4. Call 708-329-5458. For the Car Price Network, call 800-628-6425. Focus cars \$2 for new cars and \$4 for used cars, also a \$4 membership.

Consumer Reports will also fax you information about new used cars. The charge is \$12 for a new-car listing, \$10 for a used-car listing, and \$10 for each additional listing. Call 1-800-872-6229.

The result is a whole group of virtual car lines. The "entry-level Lexus" is a used Lexus, and you may pay no more for it than for a brand-new Chevrolet.

1. DEFINING YOUR DREAM CAR

HAVE THE WORLD SEEM TO HAVE an opinion about what car is best for you? The automotive publications that put the latest Ford on the cover, as usual, and untasteful as Sharon Stone, have a different view from A&A or Consumer Reports or, for instance, Jack Gillo of *The Car Book*, who harps on about fuel economy and directs the absence of passengers as a bane.

Gilks is the director of public affairs for the Consumer Federation of America and a regular on the morning talk-show circuit. To Detroit, Gilks's organization is the party pooper of the century. As far as it goes, the Car book can be quite useful—provided you understand its premises. These are suggested by the fact that the book is pressed by Consumer Action and that the foreword is by Clarence Dineen, of the Center for Auto Safety. (Could even Dickens have derived a better name for a man in such a job?) That is for the buyer who bases on fact.

"Consumeristic" guides like this one tend to view the auto industry as a vast conspiracy. Still, *The Car Book* has some issues that bull reporters tend to overlook: insurance and repair costs. For instance, road poor to good. And Giffin is stern about gas economy: only miles per gallon, about average these days, is road poor. In the same spirit, *Consumer Guide's* annual evaluation issue includes a recall history for each car. At least you know what's been fixed.

But the consumer guide books tend to be authentically one-sided, more inclined to air the dirty laundry in the spots of a vehicle. The critical auto publications oversample horsepower and fuel-pipe, but they give a driver's perspective and abundant technical information. They are also available these days on America Online and CompuServe. Especially useful are Auto World's annual AutoMate specials. Although these are far from comprehensive in the number of vehicles covered, the files combine references on drives, pass comments and owner reports with a clever production value chart for each car.

For the hardest consumer clue, look at *The Lemon Book* by Ralph Nader and the busy Clarence Dikow. It's at \$9 from the Center for Auto Safety, 2015 S Brent Way Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20004.

WHO IS J. G. POWELL, AND HOW DID HE
GET SO POWERFUL?

J David Power was a Ford financial analyst and, later, GM consultant when *ap* started his own market-research group. He began his in-dustry evaluations in *ap*. Soon his name became a familiar exclamation as if it had always been there, and as an adviser he now ranks as unquestioned as Nelson.

Subaru was the first to use J D Power ratings in its ads. (Manufacturers must pay Power for this right, incidentally.) Back links soared in the late 1980s on the strength of a favorable Power report, and Power gave the new Japanese luxury marquees a source of credibility to counteract the established traditions of European and American luxury makers.

As there are a number of Power ratings and they have to be read carefully, The Dealer's role can cite Power's reputation for his own purposes. The best known rating is the CSI, which stands for customer-satisfaction index. It covers the first twelve to fourteen months of ownership and reflects satisfaction with the dealership as much as the car. As a result, Sears and Infiniti, which specialize in soothing customers, do especially well. And thanks to Power, companies have set up their own CSI systems and allocate new models to individual dealers according to the results. So obsessed have dealers become with CSI that new buyers can expect to be called every three days after a sale to fill out a questionnaire.

More enlightening, perhaps, is Prewitt's variable-dependent dry index, prepared after four to five years.

THE REAL COSTS OF CONSUMERISM

Power's role in the automotive world is being challenged by IntelliChoice, a company that looks at the "lifecycle costs" of car ownership.

Robert McNamara was president of Ford Motor Company before JFK brought him to the Pentagon. While sitting in church one Sunday, he ditched out the Ford Falcons poster, perhaps accounting for that car's rather spotty demeanor. But McNamara's signal contribution to both Detroit and D.C. was his championing of life cycle costs. He asked: What is the real cost, not just of buying but of operating, say, a B-70 bomber with mechanics, tanker crews, and bases? Or what does it really cost you to run a Falcon year in, year out?

Life cycle costs can be expressed as a number per mile, and you'll be surprised how high it is. The government uses the conservative figure of twenty-nine cents per mile for business tax deduction purposes. (I think of plunking quarters into a machine every mile, and you quickly become a devotee of life-cycle costs, if not a convert to public transportation.) Such costs include the cost of buying or leasing, insurance, maintenance, gasoline, state fees, parking, and depreciation. The surprises are in such factors as repairs costs, which also affect insurance premiums. Once, you went to Western Arizona to buy a new headlight if a rock took out one of yours. Today a headlight, assemble only, costs \$100 or more.

InfillChoice was founded in Silicon Valley by a man named Peter Lavy. Its ratings provide life-cycle costs as a five-year total, taking certain fixed assumptions about interest rates, returns

age of the cost insured, and so on. It's a handy comparison that reveals, for instance, the high cost of insuring a Camaro and the low cost of insuring an Eagle Summit minivan. (Under the company's basic publication, The Drive-Your-Own-Guide, see call 800-CARBOOK.)

on DVD/Blu-ray. The information is also available on a CD-ROM that hints at the future of car-buying information. Popular Mechanics New Car Buyer's Guide 1997 (Books That Work) from New Media includes prices and specs for some eight hundred vehicles, each with a selection of video clips and images. Splash up a Mazda MX-6, and you can take out how the car looks in any one of five basic colors—or pick your own. To be sure, VW's website can't replicate the nuance of each maker's Cirrusline Blue Metallic. Active Drive isn't faultless, but trying out subprime and temping provides an engaging diversion from considering leasing and finance options on the calculator forms included.

Packs change frequently, of course, and resources come and go. In the future, we can imagine such guides on-line, updated daily. The disc also offers a sample of ads from Cadillac and Toyota—the electronic brochures of the future.

II. STRAPPING IT ON

IF THESE PRACTICALITIES were all that sold cars, we'd all be driving around in used white K cars. A car is fashion. The short metal sport jacket is a phrase you hear around Detroit. A car is empowerment—and shelter and office and occasional spouse. And it reveals

Why Do You Think They Call 'Em Dealers?

Road pricing, known as the "no-dickler dollar"—and predicted to take over the business—is the practice of only 9 percent of dealerships today, according to the Edmunds Company, an automotive-research firm. The number of people who like to negotiate in their car deal is up from two years ago. But a J.D. Power survey shows that 53 percent of dealers like the process. What gives? Rate it or not, most buyers remain convinced that negotiation is the only way to get the best deal. They may be right. No study of no-pricers revealed an average dealer markup of 11 percent, while the industry average is, about 2 percent.

Sheepdog Ticks: For the discerning



Lenox 63300. Could any Lenox result underpriced? Will, the 63300 gets overlooked. It offers Engleware design plus Lenox reliability and a low total-cost rating for its class from InfoBooks. Base price, \$43,600.



Engle Vision 210 Most of the attention paid to Chrysler's 1/8 cars has gone to the family sedans, Intrepid and Conquest, but the best-looking in the sporty 210-horse, 3.5-liter line, with its echoes of the Chrysler muscle-car heritage. Chrysler has widened its



Manly Prongs: Toshiba makes a laptop computer called the Portégé. Manic makes a little car called the Prongs. We think there's a similarity. Picking a lot into a little commodity is preposterous. But it has to be done with class. The Prongs is a sort of mini-Minica, fairly detailed. Base price of the ES model: \$26,145.



Alexis 104 If you really want to bottom-out, as they say on Wall Street, look at an *anytime* Alexis 1000 as being out of the U. S. market, but you may be able to find 104's as much as \$10,000 below their \$20,000 base price, complete with a three-year or thirty-six-thousand-mile warranty. And the remaining Alexis dealers will be deluged in connection to the Alexis sale.



Do They Really Care?

If every car we ask one pointed question, is there a light under the hood? We're come to believe that the light under the hood is a sign of thoughtful design. It costs the manufacturer maybe \$5 to build in, and in a dark night you'll be deeply grateful for it.

The Cupholders Rated

Norwalk was reluctant to put cupholders in its cars—why could he comprehend an automobile as anything other than driving a stick? The result: his "hot-headed" a shaver, and what thing. Chevrolet has made a question mark in the vehicles. But cup holders for machines and capacity go to Chrysler for the Jeep Grand Cherokee and Dodge Ram trucks. The then efforts, too, aren't "too full" like today's like holders.

self only on the road. But most test drives are cursory at best. It's a blur.

Avoid distracting noise clutter and use under mild conditions. Don't hesitate to floor the pedal. Find a freeway on-ramp where you really count on performance, and use whatever the unique—often on-fused with raw horsepower—that you need is there.

Consider ride and handling. Never mind roadwork coming in the car steady as the goes, or does a weave like a Charlie Hough (smackball)? How much play is there in the steering? Does it feel sluggish? Is it even through the arc of a turn? How does the wheel itself feel? (We allow the tendency toward thicker steering wheels but you may disagree.) Consider the sound and sense of the transmission. Is there a hesitation, a straining, a surge or a fade in power? There is indeed such a thing as the feel of a car. Drive it until you feel it.

HOW'S THE HOT?

It is an ill-kept secret that women have the determining voice in the majority of U.S. car purchases. Less known is the industry conviction that women tend to buy cars from the inside out.

Which is not a bad approach. Consider seating, steering, and sight. Like the fit of a jacket, the way a car suits you is an intangible but vital element that transcends size. Consider not only the features and support of seats, especially the five sides but their adjustability and where are there glaring blind spots to the rear? Try out the backseat, too.

If the wheel fits, sit it. Watch the levels, stretch for the glove compartment, use the wipers, lights, or conditioning, and look. Ideally, you're in the car in the dark as well. Look for any convenience of placement or performance that might drive you crazy. The deeply skilled wind shields of the "Darth Vader" style, maximum like your sunglasses slide into their depths beyond such an air spring glowing reflections.

Is short—does the car feel fitting as the lighter eye? It's represented by the attitude of the upper pilot who relies to climbing into the cockpit of a fifty-ton, six million airplane as "stepping in."

THE SELLING DETAIL AND THE SOUL OF A CAR

When the original Ford Taurus introduced the cunning grocery list in the trunk, it was offered as testimony to a new concern for the owner. The age of the car and the car-holder was launched and ever since then, Detroit has looked for "surprise and delight" features, winning details. These may not sell a car, but their opposite can surely stall one. Mercedes had a hard time moving the line of its S-class away

grand and no cupholder? *Bugars and dimes.*

The Lincoln Continental's grocery cart and umbrella are efforts in the same direction, and the keynotes of the entire sport of the future go in it as an analog clock. Even Chevy's Cavalier offers such handy features as a remote trunk release.

Finally, look for soul. It must be plain plain that many cars that jump off the sales lot and get high ratings are cold and soulless devices.

III. LIFE ON A LEASE

JUST AS IT MAY BE WISE to avoid discussing the value of your trade-in before you've sealed a deal on a new car, consider staying mum about your interest in leasing. Indeed, leasing has long been the subtle advertisement out of the hat to make affordable the car you thought you couldn't quite afford. "Well," he'll say, "we can put you in a program."

Leasing is best seen as an extension of the American tradition of figuring out how to live beyond your means—a successor to such fundamental institutions as the home mortgage, buying on time, the credit card, and the multi-million-dollar national debt. Its advantages were once largely restricted to us writers-for-business, that today the reason most people lease is not to get the best long-term value but to get more car for the same monthly payment.

Leasing programs blossomed during the last recession as a means of moving slow-selling luxury cars. Now some luxury mortgages lease 30 percent of their vehicles. But leasing is an ongoing reall sector of the market. With interest rates on car loans rising to between 10 and 20 percent (in contrast to subordinated loans APRs (annual percentage rates) that can run as low as 3 percent), leasing is increasingly attractive.

For car companies, leasing is a form of speculation, like pork futures. Manufacturers peg their lease debt to estimated "residual value" — what the car will sell for at the end of the lease, when they get it back or try to sell it as the lease. If they overestimate, they have to scramble to cut their losses.

With as most monthly payments, leasing makes possible car ads that look like discount coupons and car companies shopping seems easy. But underneath, the complexity of residual value, cap cost, early-termination fees, and gap insurance can make leasing daunting.

The key to reading a lease is understanding its vocabulary. Capitalized cost is the chosen thing on the sale price of the vehicle. Basically, it is the manufacturer's suggested retail price of the vehicle, less your down payment (sometimes called "cap-cost reduction"), less a dealer dis-

How to Read a Lease

WARNING: LEASE!

Now's your worst mistake!

PUTTING OFF DEALING: Some dealers may be able to sell plenty of Supermobiles at \$100,000 and lose no interest in making the "lessee participate" lease.

THE Supermobile Finance Corporation. The "higher" finance company of Supermobile, this NEW CAR DEALER. This is the division through which the company-leases interest rates to publish the lease.

MSRP: Manufacturer's suggested retail price. The dealer's price if you were buying, but it's the baseline "lessee participate" in the reduction of this number.

NONNEGOTIABLE ADVERTISEMENT: Like dealer price or MSRP, this is one of those unchangeable things. It's not as if they won't change if you're willing to pick up the car at the factory.

SECURITY DEPOSIT: Like you might drive off into the sunset with a \$25,000 car if you didn't worry about the money. It will be credited at the end of the lease.

TERM OF PAYMENTS: Submit this number to the MSRP to get a basic residual value.

PAYMENT OFFER: What you will pay of the car. Automobile Lease Rate projects a \$15,000 price, or residual value, for Supermobile in 1990, which means you won't want to buy. The dealer is selling the residual artificially high—his promise, not yours—but to sell.

SUPERMOBILE 99!
Lease of a Lifetime!

• 200 hp V-6
• ABS

• 4-wheel disc brakes
• Dual air bags

\$299 a month
36 MONTH DOWN/36 MONTHS

Available for qualified lessees at participating dealers through SFC. Based on \$25,000 MSRP. Assumes dealer participation of \$5,000. Manufacturer's suggested retail price, \$25,000. MSRP assumes dealer participation of \$5,000 down payment, \$299 first month's payment, \$299 security deposit, total monthly payments, \$2,990. Purchase option of \$25,000 required at end of lease term. Lessee liable for maintenance, repairs, and costs in excess of \$10,000 plus taxes. Lessee must pay \$10 per mile in excess of 10,000 per year. See dealer for details. Offer ends July 1, 1990.

Many offer you a discount price or a re-lease before the deal is up.

TAKE AND INSURANCE: The need to get on this of these numbers. These policies vary in how many are covered. Most cars have value that is not covered as the total value of the car, making you with a cheap penalty. More and more, however, value has to be charged on just your monthly payment.

EXCESS MILEAGE: Insurance is not shown country, where all the miles are free. Most lease specify a set number of miles per year, usually 15,000. Excess mileage of another number, or if you drive a lot, look at the cost per excess mile. This law costs a mile figure is lower than the usual 15,000 miles, but are you sure you won't be oversteering the country in the Supermobile?

LEASE OF LEASE: Thirty-six months is the standard, but twenty-four months is increasingly common. Look out the window when the thirty months deal makes a deal look better.

DEFER DOWN: This suggests a nonnegotiable-substantial, or "rental," lease, like a down-payment program.

WHAT'S NOT MENTIONED

CAPITALIZED GOST: The basic number is \$10,000, or 75 percent of the MSRP. After, other fees, such as the nonrefundable acquisition fee or dealer prep, raise the actual cap cost to a less impressive \$17,500.

GAP INSURANCE: If your leased car is totaled by an 18-wheeler, who picks up the tab—the difference between the projected residual value and what the car is actually worth? Gap insurance is vital to protect you. It is included in many deals; if not, premiums may run around \$100 or \$200 a year.

EARLY TERMINATION FEE: If you try to bail out before the lease is up, you will pay heavily. Find out just how heavily.

THE GOOD NEWS: There is no mention of "limited availability," which usually indicates a lease model from which the dealer may try to talk you up.

THE BAD NEWS: This is a pretty good deal.



What Twenty Grand Will Get You on the Strip

Prices of new cars have risen at twice the rate of inflation; this year, the average price of a new car is likely to hit the \$20,000 mark. So what does that buy you out on Route 22? We shopped up and down, looking at cars new and slightly used, new-owned and re-leased.

1-800-TRY-TO-GET-IT

- A 1992 Infiniti Q45 with just under 80,000 showed 100,000 miles for \$70,000.

- a 1994 Saab 9000 coupe, barely broken in. See \$19,995.

FOR A LITTLE MORE

- A 1992 Seattle with thirty thousand miles and a six-year, seventy-five-thousand-mile warranty for \$75,000.

- A fully equipped 1993 Chevrolet Blazer LS for \$35,400

FOR A LITTLE LESS

- A 1992 Chrysler Sebring LX sports coupe, a V-6 with 161-hp, comes in showrooms for \$19,925.

- * A 1993 Ford Bronco Victoria L3, among the last full-size, body-on-frame, rear-drive American cars, for \$25,000

- * 1-yr.-leased 1994 Chrysler New Yorker with freely decreased miles for three years at \$208 a month and just \$388 up front. Total of monthly payments: \$24,964.

IV. THE ALL-NEW PRE-OWNED CAR

IN THE AUTO PARTS STORE, not far from the Honda, the Rusty Simpson air fresheners, and the chrome aluminum rods that truckers put on their mud flaps, you can find the archetypal mass product of our time: New Car in a Can, priced at 99¢. A few drops and a used car suddenly has the gleave, promising aroma of metal, plastic, and assembly line that we irresistibly associate as new car smell.

Some 60 percent of consumers say they are considering a used car because of the higher price of new ones. And they trust cars to run

larger—the average car on the road is eight years old. But there are other factors at work here, says Chris Cadogan, an analyst for AutoPacific. "The culture seems to be changing. Even affluent people are coming to the conclusion that a new car makes sense to own a new car."

You can shop for a used car in those gray-pulpy neighborhood circles called Car Shopper or Auto Exchange—if you know what you're doing. For basic resale prices, the best-known source is *Edmund's Used Car Price & Rating*, also known as *The Blue Book*. Based at newsstands and convenience stores (dealers, however, use the NADA Official Used Car Guide (800-344-8393).

But the used-car dealer has changed, too. Sure, there are still the low-production-value TV spots that the soccer parents flapping in the wind, the forced jewelry of the World Series-style hunting, the "Blame good" signs and "No credit? No problem" ads. But increasingly, the used-car dealer is the new-car dealer—and the manufacturer.

WHY WE LOVE THE LEARNER HONEY

This past, five times as many cars will come off base as did two years ago, with more on the way. Where will they all go? Will they flood the used-car market, as automakers fear? This fear is called "the lease bomb," and it makes us go to executives quicker the way the Third World debt bomb made global bankers quiver to the point. In response, they've developed a number of clever ploys to nudge cars' reconducing, re-leasing, and "re-worshipping."

Generally, cars coming off lease are resold to dealers and then sold to consumers as used cars. But there is a push to maintain their value by reconditioning them for warranted sales or even re-leasing. And guarantees no longer come from just the dealer but from the manufacturer as well. In 1994, Mercedes-Benz introduced the most extensive manufacturer's warranty for pre-owned cars as part of its Financ program. Now its dealers are refurbishing Mercedes to meet a 124-point inspection program. Even humble Toyota Corollas and Terors are soon being rolled into a reconditioning facility in the Southeast.

Cadillac offers up to six years or seventy thousand miles of warranty on its noncommercial, pre-owned cars, and many other makers are beginning similar programs. Pity thousand miles is generally the top mileage in these programs, but a 1964 Cadillac Seville Touring Sedan with fifty-five thousand miles still has a long way to go in its first turn-up at a hundred thousand miles.

Relensing is likely to gain as well. Jaguar pushed a two-year lease program that is now coming due. Faced with an eightfold increase in cars coming off lease, it is offering attractive one- to three-year leases on previously leased cars.

Industry experts expect the re-leased car to succeed the pre-owned one as the key tool in dismantling the lease bubble—and a prime source of business.

V. KEEPING IT UP

THERE TURN UP AS WE NEED know a host of cars now have electronic ignition systems and self-adjusting valves. Hydraulic valve lifters compensate for wear and temperature changes. There are fewer plug deposits, thanks to improved spark plugs. Change your oil every three thousand miles or so—many manufacturers specify five thousand to seven thousand—and you can't go wrong. At about thirty thousand miles, bearings, greased parts, and other elements should be looked at, but cars such as the Cadillac Eldorado and Seville or the Mercury Marquis can go as far as half a hundred thousand miles without a plug change or other tune-up.

When major maintenance does need doing, it is increasingly exotic. On the new Lancia Comptel, an onboard computer keeps a log of abnormal events and other information that can be read by an "interpreting computer" at the dealership. BMW dealers have a special computer on casters that is wheeled to the vehicle to analyze it—a kind of cross between Bu-Da and Sumoanal-Ford.

Such work cannot easily be done by Miller's corner filing station. Once, you could buy a fix Chilton manual on any car and get under the hood. But dealerships make more and more of their profits from service and manufacturers keep increasingly tight control on technical information and training. Stick with the dealer as long as you can. ■



The
Essential
Great Used
Car

See Price

This is the successor to the Chevy Chase—a luxury Lincoln car now manufactured in Fremont, California, under Ford's joint venture with Toyota. From the first models in 1990, the Sea Prince has been a famously durable luxury vehicle. Recent prices are comparatively high—\$5,000, say, for a 1993 model with less than 50,000 miles. For approximately the same price, you can find the equally durable but less attractive models that bear the Toyota badge. The new Princes are desirable, too, if you can live with generic styling (to put an 11,475-bike price and high A. B. Power ratings.

The On-line
Blue Book

The future of car shopping is on-line, and you can get a jump on it today. On the World Wide Web, DealerNet is still a fairly primitive virtual bazaar, but you can consult dealers and get information on makes, models, parts, and accessories (<http://www.dealernet.com>).

Check out the WebSite's Good Car List for actual model-car ads or even the WebSite's Useful Automotive Information page for details about fluids, tires, engines, transmissions, financing, and more: <http://goodcar.nadac.com/daily/tips/automob.htm> (all free).

You can also learn about current dealer incentives—how long the \$1,500 Uderade rebate deal will be on the table—from the on-line listings compiled by Automotive News for CyberSpace Automotive Performances (http://cyberauto.com/01/coupons/extra_info/sales/incentives.html).

count among residents by the manufacturing CapCo provides a much more revealing index to a host's value than the simple revenue per person figure you see in the table. Government groups are pushing to require a client satisfaction survey of this value and a standard for its calculation. The military organization, the American Financial Services Association, has responded by pushing its own definition (the size of the standard value, lease depreciation, and any down payment) and urging its members to adopt disclosure voluntarily before more stringent government regulations arrive. The Federal Reserve, which regulates lease disclosure agreements, is moving, along with typical government agencies, to defend this key number.

The residual value is the world's best-kept secret. Some companies overestimate that value intentionally as a form of sales incentive, performing as the American tradition to move the metal now and worry about the consequences later. Others overestimate it unintentionally. Many a lessee is contacted as much as a year before the end of the lease with an attractive offer to extend or to buy the car at a low finance rate. This is a sign that the manufacturer is attempting to cut losses. A few years ago, Infiniti overvalued its residuals to establish the brand. At the end of their leases, many QX, lessees found the company offering them deals to buy or lease that were almost identical to many of the offers that were going on in the market. The rule here is to compare the price offered with the midrange, slightly projected residual value in such reference works as *Automotive Lease Guide*. To many cars buying the car at the offered rate, even if you don't want to hold on to it, and later selling or trading it is the best course.

Your Maintenance Checklist

When, when you have maintenance done, there is a lot on the paperwork to be checked if you want old parts saved. You may get a grossary certification with everything shapes, sizes, hoses, and filters. This is not the point: The point is making someone find time before he wraps up a perfectly fine throttle body.

✓ Aircraft: I have a log of every flight, every bit of maintenance. The least you can do with your vehicle is keep a notebook in the glove compartment with the dates and mileage of all changes and other maintenance and repairs. There is no overvaluing how reassuring this may be when it comes time to sell your car—"complete maintenance records" is right up there in the ads with "always garaged" or "California car." This may come in handy for two purposes as well.

The most neglected areas of maintenance are probably tires—40 percent are said to be underinflated—and alignment. Front-wheel drive cars lead in tipping and other serious woes. And the decay of the American infrastructure has produced a variety of potholes and other obstacles in tortuous rural thoroughfares. When you head for the air pump, don't forget to take along quarters. One of the signs of how far our country has progressed down the road to perdition is the use of "free air."

Another little destroyer is the car wash, its brushes filled with sand from the sand-splattered sports-ride that ran through ahead of you. And car washes ignore the underside, where salt and dirt work their corrosive effects. One thing you can still do to wash your body by hand with a red wax sponge on a sunny Saturday afternoon, with the radio on.

"I know it's late, but I'd like some sushi. How far do I have to go?"



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This month:
Gabriel García Márquez

A Dog's Disease

BY GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

A **NAKE-GRAY** DOG with a white blaze on its forehead burst onto the rough terrain of the market on the first Sunday in December, knocked down tables of fried food, overturned Indians' stalls and looting kiosks, and hit four people who happened to cross its path. Three of them were black slaves. The fourth, *Serena María de Todos los Angeles*, the only child of the Marques de Castiblanco, had come there with a maidservant to buy a string of beads for the celebration of her twelfth birthday.

It was a common occurrence for a stray dog to bite people as it chased after cats or fought turkey buzzards for the carrion in the streets, and it was even more common during the times of prosperity and crowds when the Gallatin Fleet stopped on its way to the Portobello Fair. No one lost sleep over four or five dog bites on a single day, least of all over an almost invisible wound like the one on *Serena María's* left ankle. And therefore the maid was not alarmed. She treated the bite herself with lemon and salicyls and washed the blood-stain from the girl's petticoats, and no one gave a thought to anything but the invitation for her twelfth birthday.

Earlier that morning, *Bernarda Calabro*, the girl's mother and the untitled spouse of the Marques de Castiblanco, had taken a dramatic purge: seven glasses of arsenic in a glass of sugared rose water. She had been in unnumbered sessions of the so-called shopkeeper anatomy: seductive, rapacious, brazen, with a hunger in her mouth that could have satisfied an entire barracks. In a few short years, however, she had been erased from the world by her abuse of fermented bee-

ey and cacao nibbles. Her Gypsy eyes were extinguished and her nose dulled, the shut blood and varicose bile, her men's body became as bloated and coppery as a three-day-old corpse, and she broke wind in postprandial explosions that startled the maids. She almost never left her bedroom, and when she did she was made to wear a silk nurse with nothing underneath, which made her seem more naked than if she wore nothing at all.

She had already missed her birthday seven times when the maid who had accompanied *Serena María* returned but told her nothing about the dog bite. She did, however, comment on a scarlet stain the post caused by the sale of a slave woman. "If she's as beautiful as you claim, she might be *Alypousian*," said *Bernarda*. But even if she were the Queen of Sheba, it did not seem possible that anyone would pay her weight in gold.

"A slave two meters tall weighs at least one hundred twenty pounds," said *Bernarda*. "And no woman white or black, is worth one hundred twenty pounds of gold, unless she has diamonds."

No one had been more astute than *Bernarda* in the slave trade, and the knave that if the Governor had bought the *Alypousian* it could not be for something as odious as serving in his kitchen; just then she heard the first hurrahs and fireworks of a fiesta, followed by the furious barking of the mastiffs in their cages. She went out to the orange grove to see what it could be.

Don *Ignacio de Alfaro y Duclaux*, the second Marques de Castiblanco and Lord of Duesen, had also heard the noise from his seats hummock hanging between two orange trees in the grove. He was a kinsman, effeminate man, as pale as a lily because he had drained his blood while he slept. He wore a bedsheet dyed blue in the house and a Tulleidan burrito

that increased his foreshadowing appearance. When he saw his wife as naked as the day God brought her into the world, he anticipated her question and asked:

"What means is that?"

"I don't know," she said. "What's the date?"

The Marques did not know. He really must have felt quite puzzled to ask his wife anything, and she must have felt complete relief from her saliva soaked to seep with no answer. He had no up in the hammock, intruded, when the firecrackers exploded again.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "Can it be that date already?"

The house adjoined the Divina Pastora Asylum for Female Lunatics. Agitated by the music and fireworks, the parents had appeared on the terrace that overlooked the orange grove, and they celebrated each explosion with oysters. The Marques called up to them, asking where the fiesta was, and they danced away his doubts. It was December 3, the Feast of Saint Ambrose the Bishop, and the music and fireworks thundering in the slaves' courtyard were in honor of Santa Maria. The Marques stopped his forehead.

"Of course," he said. "How old is she?"

"Twelve," replied Bernada.

"Only twelve?" he said, lying down again in the hammock. "How slow life it."

The house had been the pride of the city until the beginning of the century. Now it was a malodorous ruin, and the large empty spaces and the many closets out of place made it seem as if the occupants were in the process of moving. The dining rooms had large their checkered marble floors and treaded chandeliers draped in cobwebs. The rooms and in use were cool in any weather because of their thick masonry walls and many years of moldiness, and even more because of the December breeze that came whistling through the cracks. Everything was saturated with the oppression of dirt, neglect and gloom. All that remained of the splendid displays of the first Marques were the five hanging mosquito nets that guarded the nights.

The surrounding courtyard of the slaves, where Santa Maria's birthday was being celebrated, had been another city within the city in the time of the first Marques. This contained under his feet for as long as the slaves' traffic in slaves and flour, directed in secret by Bernada from the Marques' great plantation, had lasted. Now all that splendor was a thing of the past. Bernada had been distinguished by her sensible ways, and the slaves' yard reduced to two wooden sheds with roofs of palm fronds, where the last scraps of greenery had already been consumed.

Domingo de Adviento, a formidable black woman who ruled the house with an iron fist until the night before her death, was the link between these two worlds. Tall and bony, and possessed of an almost clairvoyant intelligence, it was she who had reared Santa Maria. Domingo de Adviento became a Catholic without strengthening her Yoruban beliefs, and she practiced both religions at the same time, and at random. Her soul was healthy and at peace, she said, because when she did not find in one faith what was done in the other. She was also the only human being with the authority to mediate between the Marques and his wife, and they both accommodated her. Only she could drive the slaves

out with a boom when she discovered them in the secret rooms containing enormous acts of sodomy or fornication with burned women. But after she did they would flee the shadows to escape the madly heat and stretch out on the floor in every corner, or scrape the crust out of the rice pots and eat it, or play with the muscos and the temble in the cool corridors. In that oppressive world where no one was free, Santa Maria was also alone and there alone. And so that was where her birthday was celebrated, in her true home and with her true family.

In the matter of so much music it was difficult to imagine dancing more silent than that of the Marques's slaves and a few blacks from other distinguished households, who brought wherever they could. The girl displayed just who she was. She could dance with more grace and fire than the Africans, sing in voices different from her own in the various languages of Africa, upbraid the birds and animals when she entranced their voices. By order of Domingo de Adviento, the younger slave girls would blacken her face with soot. They hung Santa Maria necklaces over her lapidary scapular and looked after her like birds that have never been and would have preferred to be walking if they had not been led into loops every day.

She had begun to blossom under a combination of contrary influences. She inherited very little from her mother. She had her father's thin body, however, and his irremediable shyness, pale skin, eyes of turquoise blue, and the pure copper of her radiant hair. Her movements were so naturally that she seemed an invisible creature. Frightened by her strange nature, her mother had hung a cowbell around the girl's waist so she would not lose track of her in the shadows of the house.

Two days after the fiesta, the maid mentioned in passing to Bernada that a dog had bitten Santa Maria. Bernada thought about it as the took her next bath of the day with perfumed soap before going to bed, and by the name she remembered to her mother she had forgotten it. She did not remember it again until the following night, when the maid called her down for no reason and she was afraid they had not slept. Then she took a candle and to the shadows in the courtyard and found Santa Maria asleep in the hammock of iron and royal palms that had inherited from Domingo de Adviento. Since the maid had not told her where the girl was located, Bernada raised the girl's chemise and examined her neck by torch using the light to follow the petaloid band that curled around her body like a horn's skin. As for the child it was a little break in the skin on her left ankle, with a scab of dried blood and some almost invisible abrasion on the leg.

Cases of slaves were either learned or insignificant in the history of the city. The most notorious was that of a secret peddler who stole his trade with a useless monkey whose actions were almost indistinguishable from those of humans. The animal committed crimes during the next stage by the English, but as owner on the face, and escaped to the nearby hills. The unfortunate man was clubbed to death while suffering fearful hallucinations, which mothers still sing about many years later in popular ballads meant to frighten children. Before two weeks had passed, a herd of strange mangrove monkeys descended from the hills in the full light of day. They devoured peaches and bananas and then howling and choking on their own foaming blood,

hearse into the cathedral during a St. Decian celebrating the death of the English king. Yet the most terrible crimes did not pass into the annals of history for they occurred among the population of blacks, who spent away the victims to care them by African magic in the settlements of runaway slaves.

Despite so many dreadful perils, no one, white, black, or Indian, ever gave a thought to rabies or any other disease that was slow to mature until the first recognizable symptoms made their appearance. Bernada Cabrera proceeded according to the canon creation. She thought that the group of slaves traveled faster and further than the movements of Christians, and that even a simple dog bite might damage the family's honor. She was so certain of her fear that she did not mention the matter to her husband or drink about it again until the following Sunday, when the maid went to the market alone and saw the carcass of a dog that had been hung from an almond tree so that everyone knew it had died of rabies. One glance was all she needed to recognize the blaze on the forehead and the singeing eyes of the dog that had bitten Santa Maria. But Bernada was not concerned when she heard the news. There was no reason to be. The wound was dry and not even a trace of the abrasion remained.

NOTHING MORE WAS KNOWN about those who had been bitten until the beginning of January, when a neighborhood Indian woman called Saguna knocked on the Marques's door at the sacred hour of noon. She was very old, and she walked barefoot in the full sun, leaning on a staff of cane wood and wrapped from head to toe in a white shawl. She was nervous for being a reminder of modernity and an abolitionist, although this was balanced by her admirable reputation for knowing Indian secrets that could heal the incurable.

The Marques stood within embarrassment and received her with great reluctance, and it took him some time to understand what she wanted, for she was a woman who favored slow and intricate circumlocutions.

"Whenever it is, just tell me with no more Latinizing," he said.

"I am threatened by a plague of rabies," said Saguna, "and I am the only one who has the keys of Saint Hubert, protector of hunters and healer of the rabid."

"I see no reason for a plague," said the Marques. "As far as I know, no canons or clemens have been forecast, and our sins are not great enough for God to be concerned with us." Saguna informed him that there would be a total eclipse of the sun in March and give him a complete account of all those bitten on the first Sunday in December. Two had disappeared, no doubt spirited away by their people

so try to cure them with magic, and a third had died of rabies by the second week. A fourth victim, not bitten but only splattered by the dog's spittle, lay dying in the Amor de Dios Hospital. The chief constable had ordered a hundred stray dogs poisoned so far this month. In another week no one would be left alive on the streets.

"Is that as it may, I do not know what any of this has to do with me," said the Marques. "Leave all of it to my neighbor as he may."

"Your daughter was the first to be bitten," said Saguna. The Marques responded with great conviction: "If that were true, I would have been the first to know." He believed the girl was well, and it did not seem possible that something as serious could have happened to her without his knowledge. And therefore he considered the case concluded and went back to finish his siesta.

That afternoon, however, he looked for Santa Maria in the servants' courtyard. She was helping to skin rabbits, and her face was painted black, her feet were bare, and her head was wrapped in the red turban used by slave women. He noted her if she had been bitten by a dog, and the answer was a categorical no. But that night Bernada confirmed it was true. The Marques was bewildered and asked:

"Why then does Santa Maria die?"

"Because she wouldn't let the truth even by mistake," said Bernada.

"Then it is necessary to take action," said the Marques, "because the dog had rabies."

"No," said Bernada, "the dog must have died because it bit her. This happened in December, and the little heavy is like a rat."

They both continued to be mindful of the growing nation regarding the seriousness of the plague, and against their own wishes were forced to speak again about questions of common sense. He always believed he loved his daughter, but the fear of rabies obliged the Marques to admit that this was a bit for the sake of convenience. Bernada, on the other hand, did not even ask herself the question, for she knew very well she did not love the girl and the girl did not love him, and both things seemed fitting. A good part of the hatred such of three felt for Santa Maria was caused by the other's qualities in her. Nevertheless, to preserve her house, Bernada was prepared to play out the force of shedding tears and mourning like a grief-stricken mother, on the condition that the girl's death have a sensible cause.

"It doesn't matter what," she specified, "as long as it's not a dog disease."

At that moment, as if a blazing flash from heaven, the Marques understood the meaning of his life. ■

Gabriel García Márquez began his career as a newspaperman in his native Colombia. Of *Love and Other Desires*, excerpted here and out this month from Knopf, marks a fictional return to his first vocation. A reporter witnesses the exhumation of the remains from several long-abandoned colonial tombs. One grave spills forth yards of living, suburban hair, providing Márquez with a surreal image central to the story. In prose that seems to out-Marquez Márquez, the Nobel-prize winner also revisits his native literary terrain, a Latin-Caribbean world abounding with pretexts, witches, and dissolute nobility.



EXECUTIVE CASUAL

Portraits by Davis Factor

THE REVOLUTION in office dressing has moved way beyond the notion of casual Fridays to include everyday dressing. As dress codes have been relaxed around the country—67 percent of U. S. corporations now allow some sort of casual dressing, according to one survey—there is already talk at some companies of instituting dress-up Fridays, just as a change of pace. When even legendary dress codes like the one at IBM are scuttled, more and more attention will be paid to what men wear *instead* of a dark suit, white shirt,

and tie. Some men have complained that they need a second wardrobe for casual days. While the rules of the game are unclear, certain principles seem only logical. Jeans and T-shirts are out of line at most places. Trousers and shirts should be pressed. Sport jackets, ever versatile, play a key role. On these pages, we offer some top executives' personal approaches and elements for building an office-casual wardrobe.

Thank God it's Monday: The soft, khaki-colored suit is an office-casual staple. This one is linen, with vertical creases, from Roman Republic. Jacket by Cromagnon Regis.



THOMAS D. MOTTOLA
PRESIDENT AND C.E.O., BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
In executive Kefauver, his wardrobe is more relaxed
than most. After this khaki single-breasted suit is a
Dress and a shirt with a tie. (Opposite page)



STYLING BY NANCY KACZMAREK FOR BOYS OF FASHION AT HUGO BOSS NEW YORK

The Elements of Casual

THE GLEN-PLAID sport jacket, with brushed cotton or khaki trousers, goes well with various shirts, ties, and shoes—and can be either somewhat dressy or quite casual. The one below, in superlight wool, is practically weightless and wrinkle-free.



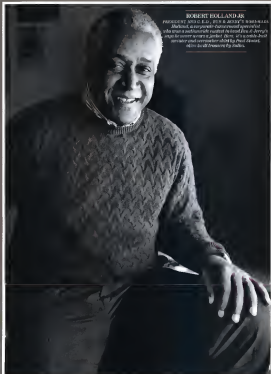
Smile, peppy
business offer
comfort and
style, from
the top.



Even head-roller
chuck by 11, Farrow
dresses things
down, without being
down.



Gloss-plaid jacket from *Dissonance*; Equestre dress: shirt by *Timberland*; striped knit top by *Suzanne Sanyal*; brushed-cotton trousers by *Calvin Klein*; leather belt by *Schugart*; jacket: square by *Dezign*.



ROBERT HILL AND JES

PAROLEMAN WHO C.E.D., DEN A JERRY'S WHEEL-CHAIR
Marked, a corporate-farmhouse specialist who was a millionaire rancher in the *Los Angeles Times* says he never wore a jacket. Now, it's a whole new cowboy and cowboy who did by Paul Davis, who is in the *Los Angeles Times*.

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PETER MOKTON

CHAIRMAN, LORD ROCK HOTEL AND CASINO,
ORANGE AND PUNAH, HAWAII. MOKTON
ARRIVES AT A NIGHT-CLUB IN HAWAII.
JACKET: GIVENCHY; TIE: GIVENCHY; SHOES: GIVENCHY.

STYLING: JANE BROWN; HAIR: JANE BROWN; MAKEUP: JANE BROWN

THE BLUE BLAZER with gray-flannel trousers remains eternal. This one is not the least bit ordinary—in a lightweight tropical wool with interesting check weave and chunky nautical buttons. The gray-flannel trousers have a touch of aqua, taking on a slightly iridescent tinge. Again, they can be dressed up or down, depending on the accessories.

For store information see page 146



Double-breasted and flared, silk pocket square, and wool-flannel trousers by Doublet; silk-and-cashmere long-sleeved polo shirt by Ballo.



Blue shirt and tie by Doublet; polo shirt by Ballo.



The made lace-up and black suede loafers by J. H. Wooten.

Rainy Day Men

Raincoats have evolved way beyond the khaki trench and poplin belmaccon, although those two venerable styles endure, often in high-tech fabrics and updated colors. Whether in silky microfiber or the new midlength shapes, these coats perform well and look great.



Hyline parka by Givert, cotton shell and wool trimmer by Emporio Armani, shoes by Th. Nord by Adam Derrick.

Belmac trench coat by London Fog, cotton shell by Paul Stuart, wool shell by Emporio Armani, silk tie by Yves Saint Laurent, shoes by J. M. Weston.

Microfiber double-breasted raincoat by Berluti, cotton shell and wool trimmer by Paul Stuart, silk tie by Yves Saint Laurent, shoes by Walker Singer.

Wind, three-quarter length raincoat with cotton lining by Burberry, two-tone and cotton raincoat by Banana Republic, boots by Kenneth Cole.

Midlength up to microfiber raincoat by Saks Fifth, David Byrne, cotton shell by Emporio Armani, wool shell by Emporio Armani, silk tie by Yves Saint Laurent, shoes by Th. Nord by Adam Derrick.

Shell raincoat with wool and a three-quarter length raincoat by Emporio Armani, cotton shell and wool trimmer by Paul Stuart, silk tie by Yves Saint Laurent, shoes by Kenneth Cole.

Wind raincoat with wool and a three-quarter length raincoat by Emporio Armani, cotton shell and wool trimmer by Paul Stuart, silk tie by Yves Saint Laurent, shoes by Kenneth Cole.

Wind, polyurethane raincoat with wool trimmer by Emporio Armani, cotton shell by Paul Stuart, silk tie by Yves Saint Laurent, shoes by J. M. Weston. For more information, see page 100.

PELAGI AND JONAS
Three-Button suit suit, left, by Pierre Dine; vest/sleeve by Geoffrey Howe; shirt tie by Geoffrey Howe; Jacket shoes by Ray Brown. Her dress by Louis Moreau; shoes by Manolo Blahnik. Two buttons, dark blue wool suit by Benetton; tie pattern shirt by Kiton; tie by The Row; socks by Ralph Lauren; shoes by Christian Louboutin.



BEYONCÉ & JAY-Z
Dress by Michael Kors; shoes by Christian Louboutin. Her vest/sleeve shirt by Geoffrey Howe; tie by The Row; socks by Ralph Lauren; shoes by Christian Louboutin.

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BOOKS

Will Blythe

The Lone Novelist Theory

A QUIET MAN SATS ALONE IN A ROOM, writing, dreaming. (Buffy Taker, white pants. No job, nothing to draw for. He is lost to secret rivers of domination and isolation, dreams that his life outside the little room ridicules with its brutal distance from his grand struggles.) In his own shy, dissembling way, he wants to inscribe his name on history. He is engaged in a great secret work, even if no one in this jangling, creaky register of a culture cares. His wit appears in the doorway, baby on her hip, asking him to go buy some milk. He waves her away without a word. *Milk? No time for milk!* Ah, he is pathetic. A loser. He knows it, it is not milk that sustains a man, it is his ability to force his dreams upon the world. He sees himself in the third person as that great television set of the world will one day see him. He has greatness in him, that will be clear.

Is he a novelist or an assassin? From what we know so far, who could say? And that may suggest the reason some of our best known writers—Don DeLillo, James Ellroy, and now Norman Mailer—bears a remarkable affinity for Lee Harvey Oswald, the perpetrator of the previous scenario. Here, only familiar it must be to slip into his voracious head. In its daily particulars, its magnifying, its measure of grandiosity and despair, his life could be theirs. Maybe the main difference between Oswald and most writers is simply that Oswald was a better shot.

Mailer's stance as Oswald's role in the assassination of John F. Kennedy by most Americans, has been sheding, if partially squashed, with suspense. Back in 1964, confronted with the Warren Commission's findings, he suggested, with a touching, surely anachronistic, faith in the wisdom of history critics, that a second commission be formed, with Edmund Wilson as its head, or with Dwight MacDonald as a one-man jury. Just three years ago, in a review of Oliver Stone's JFK, he continued to shell the Washington establishment for its devotion to the lone gunman theory in adherence, he regards as born out of political expediency. That he's decided to add his voice to the fray once again, that again with a hefty anonymous doomsday called Oswald's Tale (Random House), is hardly surprising. The shock arrives in encountering the narrator's almost professional defiance, its structural fatigue, its denotary air of amnesia. This is not the twinkly-eyed Mailer we've come to expect (and love), speaking off hypotheses with all the urban parade of a

style: dragging on myself. Nor is this a frontal assault on the solution to America's most uneasy riddle. This, instead, is Mailer setting up a nearly eight-hour page "base camp on the slopes of the great mystery." His composed a modest, albeit insightful, character study that implies, rather cautiously, that Oswald was indeed capable of acting alone. The problem is, we've been stuck on this particular base camp for years—the food stinks, the company's gotten old, and a long shadow is coming down the mountain. Maybe as well find another peak to climb if we're not going to the top.

This is not to say that Mailer has swallowed Gendt Porter's "the center is denied" brief, *Cave Closed*, on behalf of Oswald as the lone gunman. Only that what Mailer now knows about Oswald's character and about the international-speakerness manner judges him toward a somewhat more muted, less ideal, Oswald, not so much a deity of intelligence as an as a deity of their capacity. That's far enough, but you begin to wonder if all the research Mailer did on the putative WASP establishment and its most secure redoubts, the CIA, in order to write *Harley's Ghost* has resulted in his understanding as views all too well. Study the enemy long enough and you start to think like him.

No doubt the book usually presents a good deal more when Mailer's colleague Lawrence Sanders guard against to bygone RCB files on Oswald and the two men went to Russia for six months to pursue the archives and interview agents and acquaintances of Oswald and his Russian-born wife, Marina. What a thrilling chase that must have originally seemed, likely as doubt, so bound an overpowering northbound on the nose of whether Oswald was committed to any intelligence service, especially the KGB. In reality, the files cast all the attention of a single, highly hung over an interrogator's table. You can study Oswald's character, harshly illuminated at close range (though even at that proximity he is impossible to fashion totally), but almost everything the remains in blackness.

What the files and interviews do make clear is that no



A happy family? Marina and Lee in Moscow.

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Fast

A study in "The Journal of Sports Behavior" showed that cerebral vasodilation increases enough to lower skin psyching up.

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New Thinking
For A Better Quality
Of Life

one can quite figure what Oswald is up to when he defects in Moscow at the end of 1959. He is the man who would be a revolutionary if he could just find the revolution that will save him. Touchingly, the RSCG worries over the calculating Oswald as if he were a sensitive foreigner; it's determined to make a good socialist impression on the strange octages from capitalism. It sees him up as Minsk with a nice job in a radio factory and a fine apartment overlooking the Sealsch Road. Being a busy worker has not exactly what Oswald has in mind, though. He seems to crave the brightness, perhaps a role advising the government. By now, he thinks of himself as an expert in the socialist and capitalist systems. As an American defector he could not Russia, he possesses the exotic value of a male exchange student at a girl's school. He meets Marina Prentiss at a trade-union dance in March of 1961. She wears a red dress and what slips the sailor him home to her aunt and uncle's but will not sleep with him. Oswald is measured. Soon, they are married.

The RSCG continues to monitor the

newlyweds' correspondence on their fights and even their love-making. The transcript details not a CIA agent but a young, overburdened couple dogging through emotional disbalance. At times, Mailer comes close to suggesting that marriage is the obstacle that keeps an assassin that makes a man's boy in to a sorry, hopelessly married looking for recognition from the world at large.

What [Oswald] did [at] moment 1462. Well, what am I supposed to do to a guy that you have a lot of work? I mean, you don't ever cook, but other women cook. And I don't say anything about it. I don't tell you never do anything and you don't want to do the work. What do you do? The only thing you ever talk about is how good you are at work.

As intriguing as this new Russian material is, it doesn't tell as much about Oswald's character that we didn't already know. It's as if we've been peeking into a loved one's diary, only to discover no secrets, a relief but dull in the way the expected can be (this was your love capable of surprise).

It's too bad, really, because judging from the book's opening, Oswald's tale might have become one of the author's greatest books, if not the great American novel long promised, even better—more honestly—the great Russian novel. In those early sections about Marina, Oswald's family Mailer seems possessed by the shade of Tolstoy, ranging throughout fifty years of Russian history with the same command of the local idiom he displayed in regard to the Utah of *The Horse-Smen's Song*. "It was a good family," he writes of the Praskinses, "and they were hardheaded, and approximately everybody was afraid."

The philosophical crux of Mailer's investigation is this: Kennedy's death is more tolerable "if we can preserve his life as tragic rather than absurd." The irony is that though we may know more about Lee Harvey Oswald than he ever knew about himself, we still don't know enough to decide whether Oswald had the makings of a king, or whether he was a sad, invisible man trying to shoot himself into a new universe that badly associated with his on November 22, 1963. ■

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Julie Baumgold

Waiting for Kato

IT IS THE WOOD BOYS here in the East and a contemptible force is driving me. I abandon my Tishiba Sedux and move slowly down the hall toward the strange armchair. Maria, Johnnie, Lancer, F. Lee, the burning candles and the bloody socks. I cannot help myself.

It is the first day of the abiding Salvadoran road, and I hear her siren song. Come to me, I am sad. I am wearing purple velvet pants with hole tears under the feet. I have long, thin hands. Lady's hands that tremble. I wear rubber gloves to do the housework to protect my hands. I wear no makeup and flat shoes because I don't care, in front of all of you, how tall I am.

My daughter has raped me and I am in pain. I want to go home. I am from another culture where I do not exactly fit in. I am in pain. A hard life waiting near I was once. Fieldwork, then housework. Such are fates. My hands shake on my face. There's a heavy heart inside in the family dead children. I want to place them after a while, my wife a full of tears. Escape for Mr. Johnnie.

Next day things change. I leave the huge untidy world. "I don't remember."

Many people think the O. J. Simpson trial exists to show people the political process with all its legal fancy dancing or maybe the consequences of murder and near disintegration. I think it exists to distract all those who work at home, to distract them into a foreign land of jazzies, Bronx Mag's shoes, and ample hair gel. Here, in a country bordered by South Russia and North Rockingham, different things matter—like the waking rats of sex crimes, weeping pizzeria trees and garden apartments, lawyers snapping on and off the surgical gloves, strands of phantom deoxyribonucleic acid, and implemated brown envelopes. Even on the dull days when the scholars prompt deep afternoon naps, the trial provides instant university-level courses in psychology, biology, chemistry, physics, foreign language, journalism, computer science, astronomy, film, and drama. Especially drama. Everyone acts, and, like the dystopian songs, the words end with their dramatic Friday finish—the evidence unbagged, the runaway maid held over.

At times it is wonderfully Californian. Those good-looking, sharp-haired people like Kato Kaelin, Dennis Brown, and Candace Gary, each a tribute to California's cosmetic arts. Nicole's Ferrari in the garage indicates once-better circumstances in California terms. "We were doing shots of aqua," says Nicole's sister Denise. "We were happy." Cochise asks, "Do you remember one officer who was built?" But! And then the V-shaped officer's car is shown on the ELMO, the courtroom's computer screen.

Before I became a court slave, I had never heard of an ELMO or a sidebar conference. I was a court virgin, though the needs of TV advertisement had been there since Watergate and the Gulf war. Much like those in a television series, the people of the case have become familiar stock characters: the hyper-cooked L. A. housewife, the travel agent, the detectives, the lawyers with their friends, Christopher Darden in all his soothing majesty, weak to with his bourgeois, the ever-changing hideous court reporters, each with his traits and habits of speech, each so perfectly cast. Who could have played the cool Marziano manager with his shoddy-back hair any better? Or the neighbor who kept time by the old TV programs or the old women with the hearing aid or the neighbor who knew the kinds of seas or the one who said



without saying that a black man didn't belong in the neighborhood (which it was O. J. Simpson). I have watched their lives fall apart—down they go in the flower-filled courtroom.

There are so many machines and large windows in this court that it's hard to think how justice ever got done without all these screens. There are videotapes, schematics, laser-disc displays, and hole-punches so delicate that can trace the paths in red and mark the moments with green arrows that look like football plays. Everyone spends [continued on page 147]



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